

CULTURED ACTION THEATRE IN SELECTED
REGIONS OF ANGLOPHONE AND FRANCOPHONE
CAMEROON

Anne Tanyi-Tang

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



1994

Full metadata for this item is available in
St Andrews Research Repository
at:

<http://research-repository.st-andrews.ac.uk/>

Please use this identifier to cite or link to this item:

<http://hdl.handle.net/10023/15377>

This item is protected by original copyright

**CULTURAL ACTION THEATRE
IN SELECTED REGIONS OF ANGLOPHONE
AND FRANCOPHONE CAMEROON.**

BY

Anne TANYI-TANG

**THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF Ph.D TO
THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS.**

APRIL 1993.



ProQuest Number: 10166470

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10166470

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

DECLARATIONS

I Miss Anne Tanyi-Tang, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 100,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance No. 12 in October 1989 and as a candidate for the degree of Ph. D. in the Anthropology of Drama and Theatre on the same date.

In submitting this thesis to the University of St Andrews I wish access to it to be subject to the following: for a period of five years from the date of submission. The thesis shall be withheld from use.

I understand, however, that the title and abstract of the thesis will be published during this period of restricted access; and that after the expiry of this period the thesis will be made available for use in accordance with the regulations of the University Library for the time being in force, subject to any copyright in the work not being affected thereby, and a copy of the work may be made and supplied to any bona fide library or research worker.

Date 22nd April 1993 Signature

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of Ph. D. in the University of St. Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

Date *22nd April 1913*

Signature

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my late grand-mother - Mrs Enoh Regina Nyenti, my late brother - Tang Agbor Nkongho and to my mother Mrs Tang Ebika Paulina.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Undoubtedly, many people enormously contributed to the completion of the Ph. D in the Anthropology of Drama and Theatre Studies.

I am immensely obliged above all to my supervisor, Dr Dilley, who recommended text books, gave me access to his personal library, ensured that I had everything I needed for my fieldwork, consistently helped in the orderly presentation of material and also gave me the academic advice I very much needed. The thesis could indisputably not have been written without his critical and untiring guidance. His assistance was unlimited to academic guidance, he understood my financial difficulties, spoke to the University administration on my behalf and also advised me accordingly. His tremendous help was very invaluable to the realization of this work and was much appreciated.

The staff of the Department of Social Anthropology was very instrumental in the realisation of this thesis. Dr Riches supervised the thesis for a term, and his critical remarks turned out to be very helpful. Mr Tristan Platt not only showed keen interest in my study, he also recommended text books which were very helpful in this study. Dr. S. Hervey gave meaning to ghosts' language. Professor Holy always gave a smiling expression and readily listened to me. Mrs Lee unhesitatingly met my endless requests. The Department not only gave me academic, they also understood my financial problems and helped. Their academic and financial support was enormously cherished.

I am indeed grateful to Dr Kettle (the Hebdomadar) who gave me moral support and also arranged for financial assistance during my financial crisis. The Cash Office staff understood my financial difficulties and was very considerate, Jim Allan (a member of the the Photographic) who processed my photographs, the Janitors who greeted with smiling faces, all these people will never be forgotten.

The people of Bima and Ngolo regions, Pamol camps, Mundemba city, the villagers and city dwellers of Mfou city, the staff of the Departments of English and French in the Faculty of Letters and Social Sciences, the University of Yaounde, were

very kind in meeting my endless request. They can hardly be unremembered. Special thanks to the national theatre troupes which allowed me to participate, observe and film their theatre productions.

Miss Misodi Jessy who rendered an English version of an Oroko song, Tanyi Ashu who corrected French dialogues, Ambrose Patrice who proof-read the French dialogues, and Chief Dr. Abangma and Dr. Patience Abangma who gave me moral as well as academic advice can not easily be unrecalled.

My brother Mr Tanyi-Tang Enoh's financial assistance throughout this study cannot ignored. I am indebted to the Cameroon Government whose earnest financial support throughout my education has contributed immensely in making me what I am today. I am grateful to my relatives and friends who constantly communicated and gave me moral advice. Their advice was very helpful in strengthening my determination to fulfil the requirements of this course.

I hope all these people and those I have not mentioned will appreciate the outcome of their earnest sacrifices.

ABSTRACT.

This study is primarily concerned with notions of identity and conceptions of development in Cameroonian village, city and national theatre performances, as well as audience responses to them. What I call 'Cultural Action Theatre' is different in many respects from Theatre for Development: the latter is dominated by theatre activists, is short-lived and involves enormous cost and organisation; the former is produced by members of a community, is long-lived and less costly. The messages in performances are analysed and given meanings by the audience, whose responses are determined by contemporary political events. These events also affect the nature of theatre performances.

Performances suggest that Cameroonians are dissatisfied with the economic and political relationship between Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon and between Cameroon and developed countries. The study reveals that Cultural Action Theatre is used by oppressed people (e.g. women) to convey messages to their superiors (men, chiefs and politicians), and that oppressed groups produce more theatre than privileged groups. Disadvantaged Anglophone theatre practitioners use a direct style to convey practical problems whereas Francophones use a subtle style to express predominantly philosophical issues.

This theatre deals with issues of local, regional and national identity and also with political leadership and morality. The choice of a particular language in any given performance is also crucial in engendering different cultural and political identities. This study argues that to mobilise people for action, a play must appeal to their sense of identity and to portray the advantages that would arise from their action. Theatre practitioners at all levels in Cameroon are concerned with different causes of national underdevelopment and hence conceive of the notion and the practice of development from different angles.

The main body of the thesis is divided into two parts. The introduction to the thesis briefly describes the geography of Cameroon, the historical influences on the domains of education, society, economy and politics, and on the Anglophone and Francophone zones of Cameroon, and it discusses terminologies and concepts and my

methodology. Part one consists of two chapters. Chapter one describes village performances in selected regions in Anglophone and Francophone zones. Chapter two is concerned with city performances in the respective selected zones. Part two, chapter 3-6, concentrates on national performances. Chapter three describes political leaders and development in Anglophone and Francophone National performances. Chapter four focuses on women and their role in national performances. Chapter five examines cultural and political identities in national performances. Chapter six is concerned with morality, ethics and national sentiments in national performances. The conclusion summarises my findings.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

	Page
	1
I. i. THE GEOGRAPHY OF CAMEROON.	
I. ii. A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE HISTORY OF CAMEROON.	4
I. ii. (a). Cameroon under the German Administration.	4
I. ii. (b). Cameroon under Britain and France.	7
I. ii. (b). i The Influence of the Mandating Countries' Social Policies in their Respective Zones.	8
I. ii. (b). ii The Influence of the Mandating Countries' Economic Policies in their Respective Zones.	14
I. ii. (c). i The Influence of the Mandating Countries' Political Programmes in Their Respective Zones.	14
I. ii. (c). ii The Emergence of National Political Parties and the Attainment of Independence.	30
I. ii. (c). iii. Post-Independence Cameroon.	36
I. iii. DISCUSSIONS OF TERMINOLOGIES AND CONCEPTS.	40
I. iii. (a). Identity.	41
I. iii. (b). Development.	44
I. iii. (c). Theatre.	47
I. iii. (d). Cultural Action Theatre.	54
I. iii. (e). Theories and Practices of Theatre for Development.	55
I. iii. (e). i. Theories and Practices of Theatre for Development. in Developed Countries.	56
I. iii. (e). ii. Theories and Practices of Theatre for Development in other Developing Countries.	59
I. iii. (e). iii. Theories and Practices of Theatre for Development	60

in Africa.	
I. iii. 'e'. iv. Theories and Practices of Theatre for Development in Cameroon.	64
I. iii. 'f'. Comparison Between Theatre for Development and Cultural Action Theatre.	68
1. iii. 'g'. Methodology.	72
Footnotes.	75
PART ONE: VILLAGE AND CITY PERFORMANCES.	78
CHAPTER ONE: VILLAGE PERFORMANCES IN THE ANGLOPHONE AND FRANCOPHONE ZONES.	79
1. A. VILLAGE PERFORMANCES IN THE BIMA AND NGOLO REGIONS.	81
1. A. (i). Village Performances in the Bima Region.	81
Theatrical Performances in Fabe Village.	82
Fabe Village Women's Performances.	88
The Old Man's Performance.	91
Response of the Audience.	93
Performances at Esoki Bima.	95
The Performances in Makango Village.	100
Installation and Indigenous Performances.	101
1. A. (ii). Village Performances in the Ngolo Region.	109
I. B. VILLAGE PERFORMANCES IN MFOU SUB-DIVISION IN THE FRANCOPHONE ZONE.	120
1. B. (i). The Social Background of the <u>Megang</u> Group's Performances.	120
1. B. (ii). Description and Analysis of the <u>Megang</u> Group's Performances.	124
1. C. CONCLUSION.	134
1. C. (i). Themes.	134

1. C. (ii). Motives.	138
1. C. (iii). Theatrical Devices.	143
1. C. (iv). Audiences' Responses	146
1. C. (v). Functions.	150
Footnotes.	151

CHAPTER TWO: CITY PERFORMANCES IN THE ANGLOPHONE AND FRANCOPHONE ZONES.

2. A. THE PERFORMANCES IN MUNDEMBA.	154
2. A. (i). Opposition Plays.	154
2. A. (ii). Entreaty Plays.	165
2. A. (iii). Persuasive Plays.	175
2. B. PERFORMANCES IN MFOU.	183
2. B. (i). Performances of École Première Populaire de Mfou.	184
2. B. (ii). The Performance of Lycée de Mfou.	195
2. C. CONCLUSION.	206
2. C. (i) Themes.	206
2. C. (ii) Motives.	208
2. C. (iii) Theatrical Devices.	212
2. C. (iv) Audiences' Responses.	217
2. C. (v) Functions.	218
Footnotes.	

220

PART TWO: NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.

CHAPTER THREE: POLITICAL LEADERS AND DEVELOPMENT IN ANGLOPHONE AND FRANCOPHONE NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.	222
3. A. POLITICAL LEADERS AND DEVELOPMENT IN ANGLOPHONE NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.	222
3. B. POLITICAL LEADERS AND DEVELOPMENT IN	

FRANCOPHONE NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.	248
3. C. Conclusion.	270
Footnotes.	272
CHAPTER FOUR: WOMEN AND THEIR ROLE IN NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.	273
4. A. WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT IN ANGLOPHONE NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.	273
4. B. WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT IN FRANCOPHONE NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.	288
4. C. CONCLUSION.	301
Footnotes.	302
CHAPTER FIVE: CULTURAL AND POLITICAL IDENTITIES IN NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.	303
5. A. CULTURAL AND POLITICAL IDENTITIES IN ANGLOPHONE NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.	304
5. B. CULTURAL AND POLITICAL IDENTITIES IN FRANCOPHONE NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.	338
5. C. CONCLUSION.	350
Footnotes.	354
CHAPTER SIX: MORALITY, ETHICS AND NATIONAL SENTIMENTS.	355
6. A. MORALITY, ETHICS AND NATIONAL SENTIMENTS IN ANGLOPHONE NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.	355
6. B. MORALITY, ETHICS AND NATIONAL SENTIMENTS IN FRANCOPHONE NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.	370
6. C. CONCLUSION.	386
Footnotes.	386
GENERAL CONCLUSION.	387

APPENDIX.	407
------------------	-----

BIBLIOGRAPHY.	412
----------------------	-----

PICTURES

Pictures Numbers 1& 2	96
Pictures Number 3 & 4	102
Pictures Number 5 &6	114
Pictures Number 7 & 8	122
Picture Number 9 & 10	159
Picture Number 11, 12 & 13	176
Picture Number 14 & 15	187
Picture Number 16, 17 &18	189
Picture Number 19 & 20	224
Picture Number 21 &22	244
Picture Number 23 & 24	250
Picture Number 25 & 26	285
Picture Number 27 & 28	293
Picture Number 29 & 30	382

FIGURES

Fig. number 1	Different political units and their leaders	26
Fig. number 2	Political units and the heads	29
Fig. number 3	Geographical and Social identities	44
Fig. number 4	Integral parts of theatre	50
Fig. number 5	Relationship between rituals and theatre	53/54

Fig. number 6	The rise and fall of tensions in the performance	227
Fig. number 7	The woman is the victim of the global economic exploitation.	296
Fig. number 8	Diverse groups within the Anglophone community	316
Fig. number 9 'a'	Different identities perceived by the playwright director, producer and performers	336
Fig. number 9 'b'	Different identities perceived by the audience	336

MAPS

Map number 1	Opposite	Page	2
Map number 2	"	"	3
Map number 3	"	"	3
Map number 4	"	"	3
Map number 5	"	"	8
Map number 6	"	"	8
Map number 7	"	"	78
Map number 8	"	"	78
Map number 9	"	"	152

ABBREVIATIONS

Cameroon Development Corporation	CDC
Native Administration	NA
Food & Agricultural Organisation.	FAO
World Wildlife Fund	WWF
Bima Cultural Union For Development	BICUL

Ngolo Cultural Development Association	NGUDA
Cameroon People's Democratic Movement	CPDM
Jeunesse Camerounaise Française	JEUCAFRA
United Nations	UN
Union Camerounaise	UC
Démocrates Camerounais	DC
Paysans Independent	PI
Union des Population du Cameroun	UPC
Cameroon Youth League	CYL
National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons	NCNC
Cameroon National Federation	CNF
Kamerun United National Congress	KUNC
Kamerun National Congress	KNC
Cameroon Radio and Television	CRTV
Social Democratic Front	SDF
Senior-Divisional Officer	DO
Sub-Divisional Officer	SDO
Divisional Development Meeting	DDM.
Yaounde Collective Children's Theatre	YCCT

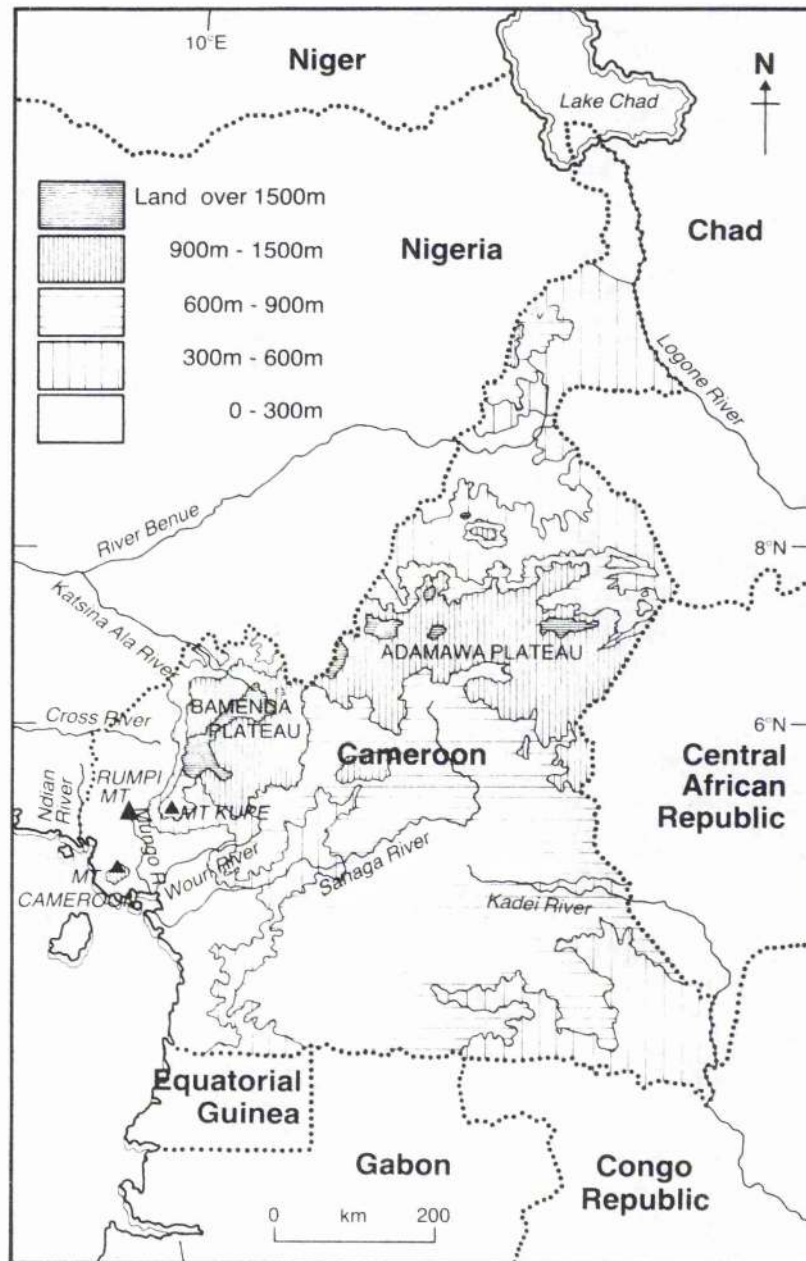
INTRODUCTION

This study examines Cultural Action Theatre. The theatre was produced and performed by groups, such as women who consider themselves to constitute a subordinate group in the society, the poor, semi-educated and uneducated who believe that they are the victims of exploitation and suppression by the rich, well educated and the ruling class. The theatre was also produced and performed by ethnic and regional groups who believe their regions are exploited for the benefit of other regions. Lastly, theatre was produced and performed by educated professional Cameroonians who use theatre to depict the identity of Cameroon and to portray the impediments of national development. On the whole, the performances deal with social, economic, political, cultural and gender issues.

However, it is imperative to begin this study with a brief introduction. This introduction is concerned with three main issues. The first part locates Cameroon and in particular Mundemba and Mfou Sub-Divisions which I have chosen to represent English-speaking and French-speaking Cameroons zones of the country respectively ¹. The second part provides a brief description of the history of Cameroon and the historical influence in the domains of education, socio-economics, and politics, in both parts of the country. The third part discusses terminologies and concepts. It reviews some of the theories and practices of Theatre for Development, and proceeds to discuss the similarities and differences between Theatre for Development and Cultural Action Theatre, and my methodology.

I. i. THE GEOGRAPHY OF CAMEROON.

The genesis of the political frontier of Cameroon dates back to 1885 when the European powers of Germany, France, and Britain signed an agreement at Berlin, known as the Berlin Conference, and as a consequence, laid claim to different parts of Africa (Fage 1955: 152). The subsequent territory called Cameroon pulled together



Map 1. Physical features and bordering countries

Map number 1. Countries which share boundaries with Cameroon,

people of different historical, traditional, cultural, political, economic, social, and religious backgrounds. Le Vine maintains that the political frontiers of Cameroon before 1960 had one thing in common - the frontiers followed neither geographical nor human boundaries (Le Vine 1964: 1).

Cameroon is bounded by six different countries and there are few natural boundaries separating it from its neighbours. To the west it shares a frontier with the Republic of Nigeria, to the north and north-east with Chad, to the east with the Central African Republic, and to the south Cameroon is bounded by Gabon, Congo, and Equatorial Guinea. In the far north is Lake Chad and to the south-west the country is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean (see map number one for illustration).

This geographical position presents the country with a dual location in Africa. Some people classify it as part of West Africa, and others as Central Africa. Le Vine asserts that due to the position of Cameroon, it has been called the hinge of Africa (Le Vine 1964: 1). Also in this respect, Ejedepang-Koge maintains that Cameroon's situation at crossroads in the centre of Africa has rendered Cameroon the privilege of becoming the meeting point of people of various languages and physical characteristics. It is also a meeting point for different climatic conditions, vegetation and types of soil. The country has also come under many outside influences from Europe (Portugal, Germany, Britain, France) and the United Nations Organization. Cameroon thus merits the apt description of "Africa in miniature". It is the epitome of Africa itself (Ejedepang-Koge 1985: 57).

Despite the national frontiers, Cameroon people maintain links with the citizens of neighbouring countries. For example, the indigenous people of Mamfe and Ndian Divisions in the South West Province, have the same culture and language as the people of south-eastern Nigeria. Ndian's villages (such as Bima and Ngolo villages in Mundemba Sub-Division) are close to the frontier of Nigeria (see map number one for illustration) and their inhabitants frequently intermarry with Nigerians, paste Nigerian almanacs on their walls, use Nigerian currency, and produce performances which deal with their dual identities. Thus the Cameroon government faces problems in selling tax coupons (coupons are issued to people when they pay their annual due to the

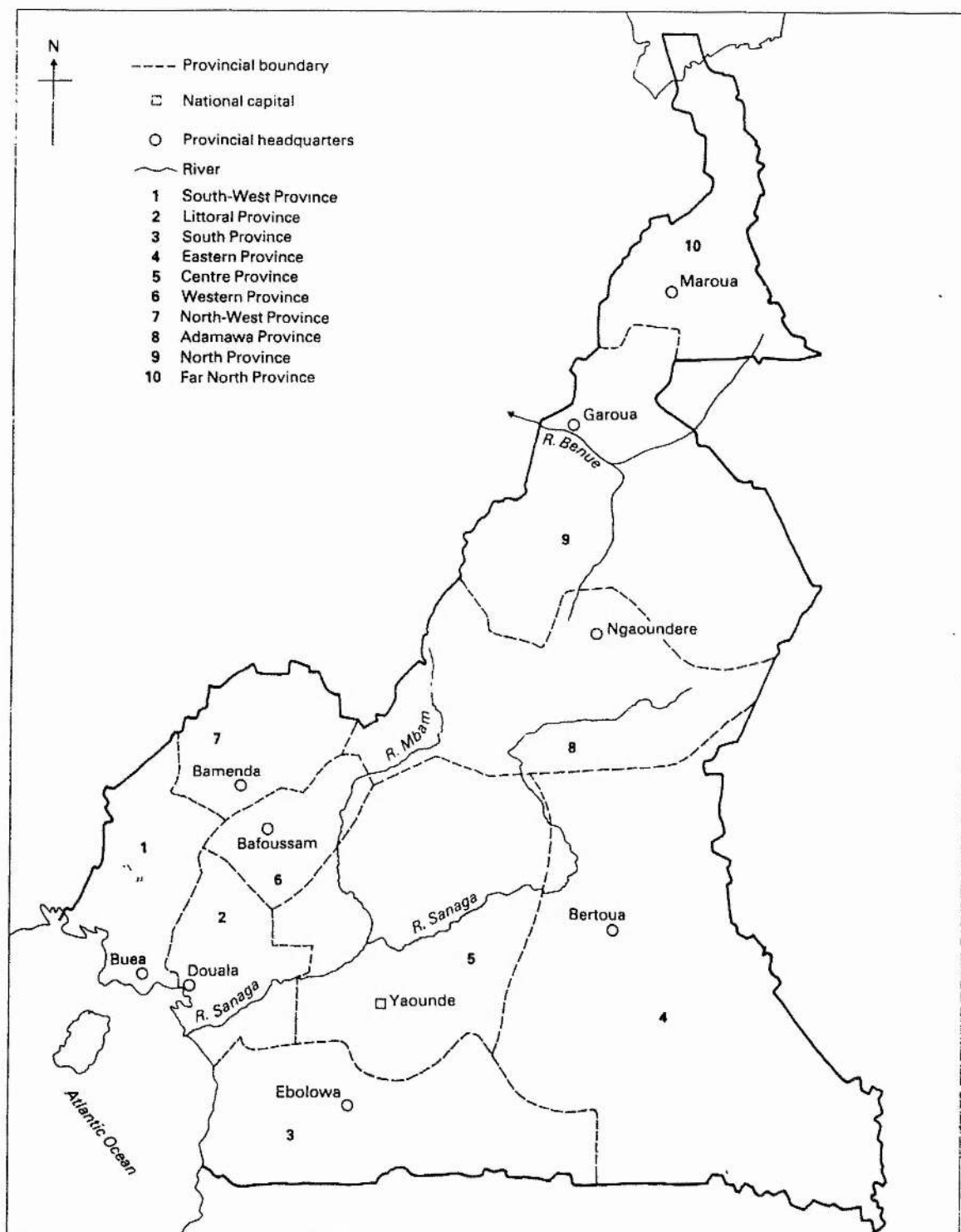


Fig. 47 Cameroon: Provinces

Map number 2. The ten Provinces in Cameroon.

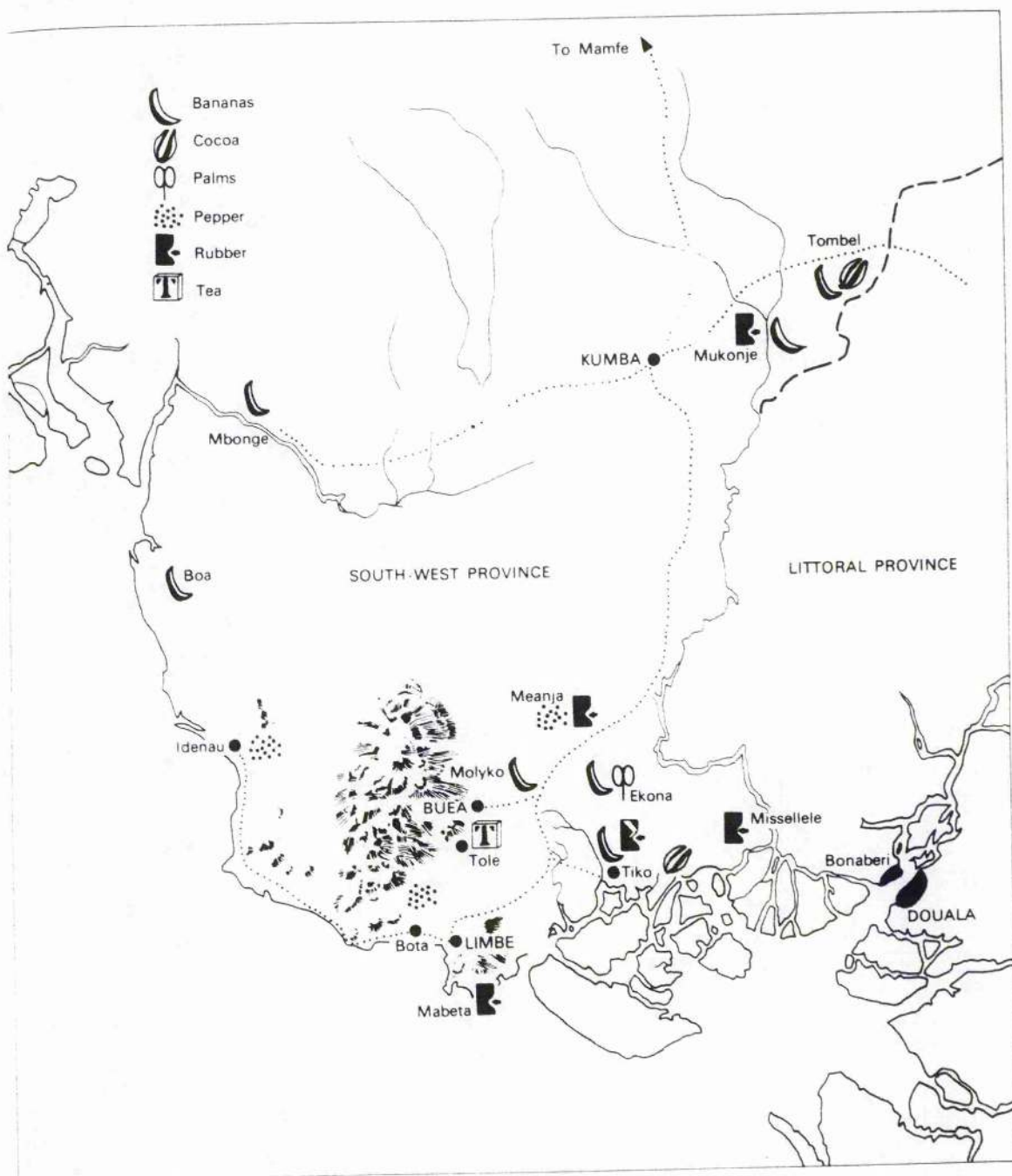


Fig. 29 Estates of the Cameroon Development Corporation

Map number 3 South West Province's natural resources,

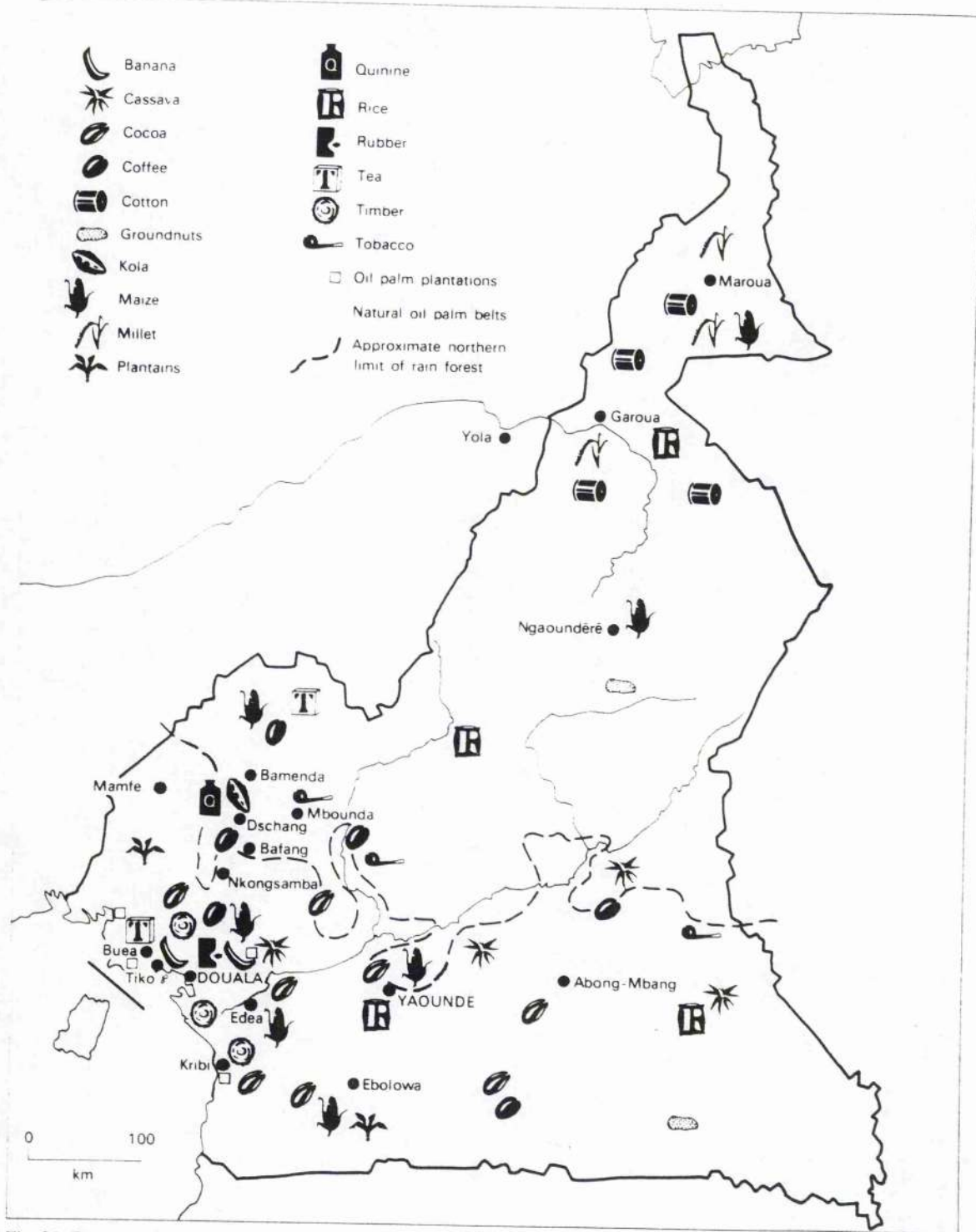


Fig. 26 Cameroon: crops

Map number 4.

Cameroon's natural resources.

government) in these villages, and in maintaining its influence in a remote area of the country where no tarred roads link it with the cities of Cameroon.

The country is divided into ten provinces: South, North, Western, Eastern, Far North, Central, Littoral, Adamawa, North West, and South West (see map number two for illustration). It has a population of twelve million, comprising over seventy main ethnic groups and its territory covers an area of 475,442 square kilometres (Ngwa 1978: 30).

Mundemba is a Sub-Division in Ndian Division in the South West Province, one of the two provinces that make up the English-speaking zone. The dominant ethnic groups in Mundemba Sub-Division are Ngolo, Bima, Batanga, Balondo, Balue, Korup. Apart from the Korups (who speak a distinct language which is only understood by the inhabitants of south-eastern Nigeria), these ethnic groups speak the same language, the 'Oroko' (meaning 'welcome') language, and thus are generally referred to as Oroko. The Oroko language is characterised by a series of dialects. For example, the word Kuu (a village dignitary and seer) has variations in pronunciation within the various clans. The Ngolos and Bimas who are close neighbours pronounce the word 'kuu', the Batangas 'koo' and the Balondos 'koh'. The French-speaking Mfou Sub-Division is occupied by Beti, Ewondo and others. These different ethnic groups are indiscriminately referred to as the Ewondos for the simple reason that the majority of the people speak the Ewondo language. Besides the indigenous languages, there are foreign languages - English, French and Pidgin English. How these languages were implanted in Cameroon and their function are examined below with reference to colonial and the mandating countries' policies in Cameroon.

The different ethnic groups live in varied environments. Some regions are richer and more endowed with diverse natural resources than others. For example, Ndian Division is characterised by dense forest, whilst Fako Division has oil deposits. These two divisions - Ndian and Fako are in the South West province in the Anglophone zone. The indigenous people of the South West Province believe that their Province contributes a fair share to the gross national product, but receives only a meagre share of the national income (see maps number three and four for illustration). They therefore complain about the unequal distribution of the national income. Local performing artists

from the South West Province give expression to the people's grievances in theatre; the performances that tackle these issues are discussed in chapters one, two and five.

The country has two main seasons - the dry and rainy season. The dry season begins in the month of October and ends in mid April. It is a period of merry-making and repose especially to farmers who engage in festivities, rituals, drama, musical concerts, pantomimes, masquerade and other forms of entertainment. It is also a season of fishing, hunting, repair of houses, preparing mbandas (a hanging flat container built over the fireside and used for drying fresh food such as meat, fish, different types of vegetables, and firewood), and cocoa ovens (large ovens used for drying cocoa). The rainy season covers the period between mid-April and September. It is a period of intensive farming particularly for small holder farmers who engage in the cultivation of the country's cash crops (cocoa and coffee) and subsistence crops (yams, cassava, cocoyams, plantains, rice, potatoes, various vegetables, spices, melon, maize, and so on), rather than the plantation farmers.

It is worth noting that this rigid division between dry and rainy seasons does not apply to all the provinces. For example, Ndian Division in the South West Province experiences much more frequent torrential rainfall and periods of intense sunlight. These favourable climatic conditions and the richness of the soils in many parts of the country (such as the South-West, North-West, Western and Centre Provinces) mean that these provinces are extremely fertile producing high agricultural yields.

The favourable climatic conditions, the rich soil, the natural resources, and historical factors, have combined to determine the people's economic activities. These economic activities are examined in historical perspective, and Mundemba and Mfou Sub-Divisions are used as illustrative cases of the two language zones in Cameroon.

I. ii. A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE HISTORY OF CAMEROON.

This section is concerned with a brief description of the history of Cameroon and the influence acting on education, and on social, economic and political processes in Cameroon. The section is divided into three parts: the first part is concerned with Cameroon under the German administration, part two describes Cameroon under

British and French administrations. The last part is concerned with post-independence Cameroon.

I. ii. (a). Cameroon under the German Administration.

The first Europeans to visit Cameroon were the Portuguese. Prothero maintained that the name Rio dos Cameroe, or River of Prawns, was certainly given by one of the early Portuguese explorers. He added that Cameroon appeared in Camerios' map of 1502. Thus the name Cameroon evolved from Rio dos Cameroes or River of Prawns. However, although the Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive on the coast of Cameroon, they failed to establish permanent settlements. Satisfied with the profitable trade in natural resources such as ivory and gold further west, the Portuguese failed to explore the Cameroon hinterlands (Prothero 1920: 6 - 8).

Although the Portuguese did not make lasting settlements in the country, Cameroon was vulnerable to the predatory trading of later competitive European nations. However, before the scramble for Africa in the late 19th century, Cameroon intimated its desire to be occupied by the British instead of by Germany or France. In spite of this request, Britain failed to occupy Cameroon (Le Vine 1964: 20; Ngoh 1988: 16; Epale 1985: 20).

In 1883, French administrators and trading companies began signing treaties with Cameroon kings and local chiefs. The British became alarmed and rushed to sign similar treaties. Unfortunately it was too late, the Cameroon leaders had already signed treaties with the French. Nevertheless, the battle over which European power should gain supremacy over Cameroon continued as Germany, Britain and France all sought to possess the territory. Germany won and the territory became a valuable asset to the occupier as it provided Germany with raw material for its burgeoning population, with strategic military positions - especially the ports of Limbe (former Victoria), Douala and Kribi - and with men to fight in case of any battle between Germany and her rivals- as was apparent in the First World War (Le Vine 1964).

During this period the German administration and the missions established schools and churches. Religion and the German language were the main subjects in the

school curriculum². The primary purpose of making religion one of the two main subjects was to create a Christian community, wherein converts were to act and live like Christians. Furthermore, the administration believed that the acquisition of the German language meant that the indigenous people would perceive the world from a German perspective. In short, it was hoped that converts and educated people would denounce their indigenous values and religion, and embrace Christianity and a western mode of life. The administration and the missionaries failed to realise that traditional religion and the people's values upheld a community's morality and provided the community with a sense of direction and meaning.

As regards the economic development of the region, prior to the German colonization of Cameroon, the indigenous people cultivated oil palm kernels, which was the main crop. The German firms introduced the cultivation of cocoa and coffee, and also established *Westafrikanische Pflanzungsgesellschaft Victoria* (The West African Plantation Company Victoria), now known as Cameroon Development Corporation (C.D.C.) and Pamol Industry in the South West Province (Epale 1985: 25-34). The plantations attracted thousands of labourers from all parts of the country. For the first time a monetary system was introduced as labourers received their wages in cash. Drawn into this cash economy, the labourers used their wages to purchase luxurious European goods available in European shops, and also to pay bride-wealth in money instead of providing animals, rendering services, or exchanging women. These labourers from different ethnic communities and from diverse backgrounds had very little in common except their employment and class. They saw themselves as a unit of individuals with shared interests and not as an amalgamation or a nexus of ethnic groups. Furthermore, the drift from natal residences to the plantations and the growth of trade in the coastal regions (Douala and Victoria) boosted the coastal population and also signalled the emergence of urban centres, such as Limbe (Le Vine 1964: 47).

Despite an 'improvement' in the people's lifestyle and 'economic progress', the administration was characterised by harsh practices, such as the unwillingness to improve labourers' working conditions in the plantations, the expropriation of the indigenous people's (particularly the Doualas') property, the practice of removing

indigenous people from their natal land and settling them in the hinterland, and the practice of flogging labourers in the plantations (*ibid*: 30).

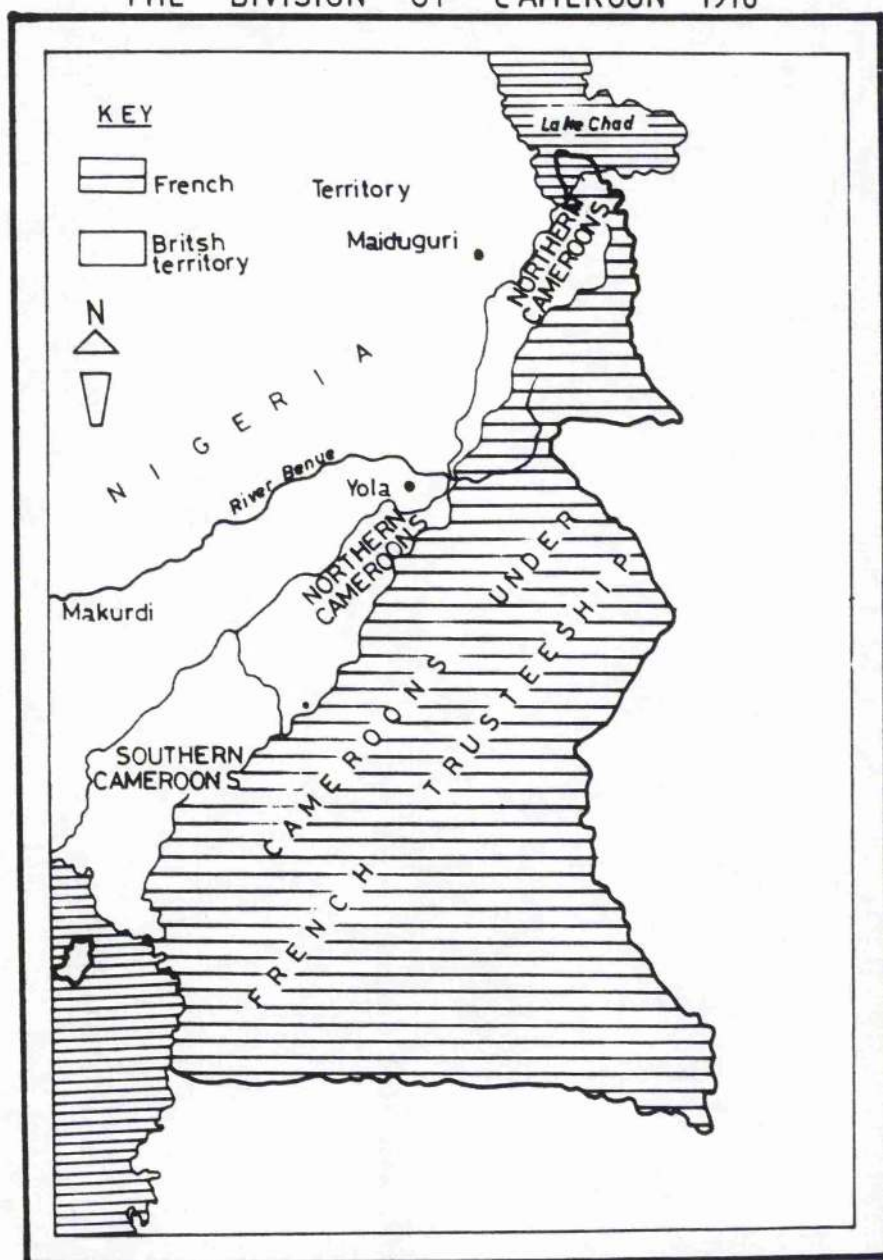
Turning to politics, the German administration intended to impose a grassroots political organization. For example, the original criterion of Germany for chieftainship was based on loyalty to the colonial system and not on traditional legitimacy. Kings and chiefs who opposed the colonial system were executed, as in the cases of Kings Samba, Manga and Ngoso. The Lamidos (traditional rulers) of the north, who refused to carry out the orders of the colonial authorities, were either dismissed or executed and replaced with more cooperative rulers (Ngoh 1988: 43). Given the administration's attitude towards the indigenous people, Le Vine was quick to point out that Cameroon was fortunate that both France and Britain did not come to terms with Hitler on the question of returning the mandates to Germany during the years 1935-39 (Le Vine 1964: 130). Had the mandates been returned as requested, perhaps Germany would have imposed some form of apartheid especially as expropriation of natives' property and the execution of Chiefs were already in practice (*ibid*: 29-30 and 113-4).

Nevertheless, in spite of the conduct of the German administration, jobs and currency were introduced which in turn improved the people's life-style. The administration also paved the way to national political awareness as labourers rallied to oppose the economic and social conditions in the plantations. In a sense the German administration was very instrumental in bridging class, ethnical and regional barriers, and also lessened the hostility that prevailed amongst the different ethnic groups, since they had to unite against foreign domination. The German administration is therefore a symbol of unity and is considered by many Cameroonians to be the mythical parent who united the different ethnic groups in Cameroon (*ibid*: 38).

I. ii. (b). Cameroon under Britain and France.

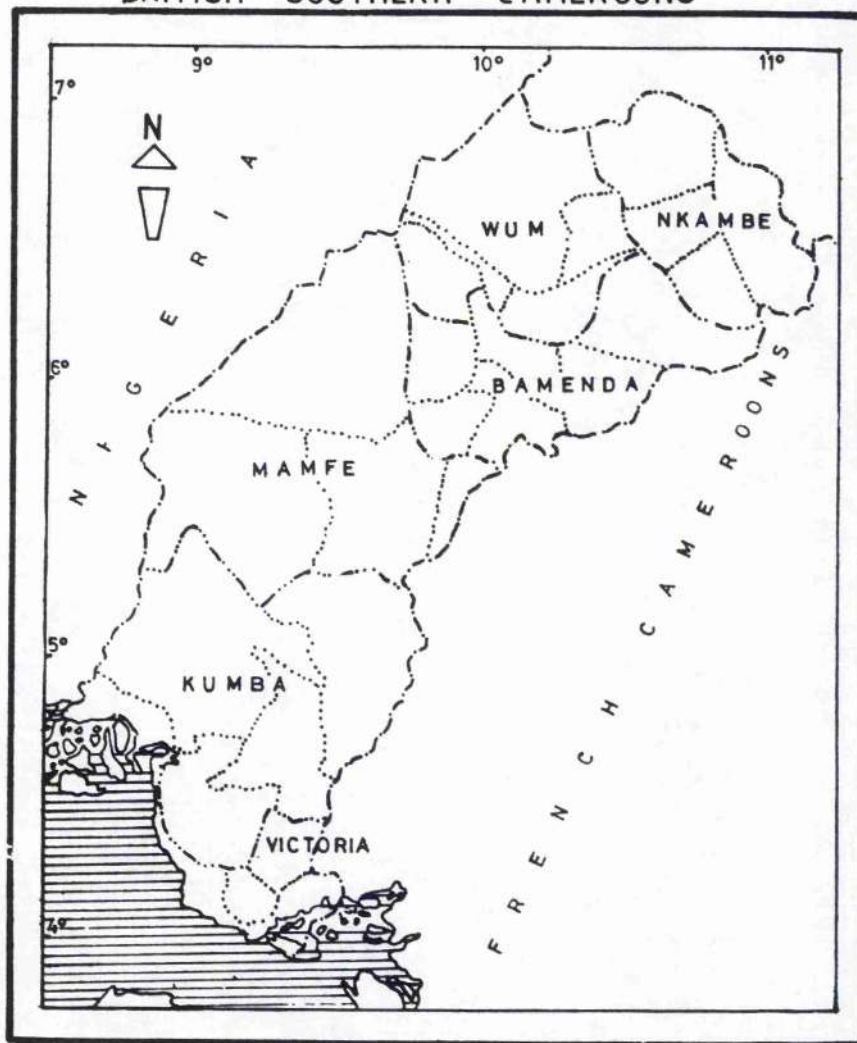
The German administration lasted only until Germany's defeat in the First World War. Following the defeat, Germany vacated the territory, and the Treaty of Versailles upheld the partition of Cameroon between France and Britain³. France's mandate consisted of Eastern, Western, Northern, Central, Adamawa, Far-North,

THE DIVISION OF CAMEROON 1916



Map number 5. French and British Cameroons.

BRITISH SOUTHERN CAMEROONS



Map number 6. British Cameroon or Southern Cameroons.

Littoral, and Southern Provinces. The British mandate comprised of South-West, North West, and part of Northern Nigeria (See maps number 5 and 6 for illustration). These two mandating countries introduced different social, educational, economic and political programmes in their respective mandates. Each policy is discussed under a subheading.

I. ii. (b). i The Influence of the Mandating Countries' Social Policies
in their Respective Zones.

The French came to Cameroon with the ultimate aim of westernizing the indigenous people, and thus introduced the policy of assimilation whereby Cameroonians could be fully absorbed into French cultural life. They were to remain Cameroonians in colour and blood but French in their way of thinking. Jeanneyey maintains that:

La France désire, plus que toute autre nation, diffuser au loin sa langue et sa culture...elle leur apporte un mode d'expression et une methode de pensée (Jeanneyey 1964: 64).

Macaulay (a British administrator in India) recommended a similar policy in India. A thoroughly English educational system was to create a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour but English in taste, morals, and in intellect (Macaulay quoted in Anderson 1990: 86).

Critics, such as Beti, assert that this policy endeavours to model a people exactly as one might a vase; to impose upon the people the form that the colonizer desires (Beti 1988: 33). Another critic, Freire, calls such a process a 'cultural invasion' wherein occupiers penetrate the culture of another group, disregarding the latter's potential and impose their own view of the world upon those they invade (Freire 1972: 150).

Because the French administration had a desire to westernise Cameroonians, the administration zealously promoted western education which could enable the indigenous population to assimilate the French life-style. The desire was partially realised because the French administration inherited well-established missions and schools (Protestants, Catholic and Presbyterian) from the Germans. The administrators

allowed the missions to continue with primary education, while they established higher educational institutions. Mbuagbaw et al asserted:

French colonial authorities, finding missions already firmly established by the Germans...allowed them a far greater role in education. The mission schools, Catholic, Protestant and Presbyterian flourished in the inter-war years, and the number of pupils enrolled more than doubled. The government schools concentrated on the upper primary level, with students being trained for jobs in the administration, agriculture and medicine. The École Supérieure at Yaounde was founded in 1920, fifteen years before its first counterpart appeared in French Equatorial Africa. By 1939, there was also a professional school and a railway school at Douala, a school for school assistants at Ayos, an agricultural school in Yaounde...This was the best educational system available in any of France's Black African colonies...The curriculum was heavily European in content (Mbuagbaw et al 1987: 83-4).

In this respect, primary, secondary and higher institutions flourished in the French Mandate, and this enabled many people to acquire western education. For example, in Mfou Sub-Division, every child, male or female, who was interested in western education was given an equal opportunity. Thus unlike other parts of Cameroon where a girl's education was considered less important (Tiagha 1985: 65 - 66), in Mfou Sub-Division both girls and boys had access to schooling. The French also encouraged female students who were either pregnant or nursing children to pursue studies, while their parents supported them and their children. This practice prevails today. Consequently, these two factors, the use of previously established educational facilities and encouragement of women, have boosted the number of educated females in French-speaking Mfou Sub-Division. As a consequence, women constitute a significant percentage of the elites in the region. Moreover the acquisition of western education has enabled many women in Mfou Sub-Division to occupy subordinate administrative positions in the civil service, and thereby have attained financial independence that has incidentally reduced the social gap between the sexes ⁴.

By contrast, the British administration in Cameroon did not use education as a means of enabling Cameroonians to assimilate the British life-style. The British administrators considered education as an essential requirement for subordinate administrative posts, and allowed primary education to be managed by the Native Administration (NA), whilst missions provided elementary education with the aim of

proselytizing Christianity to the indigenous people (Ngoh 1988: 170). However, the high demand for primary schools led to shortages. For this reason, some villages in the British mandate initiated community schools. For example, Ngolo villages built community primary schools. This initiative increased the number of educated elites in the region. In contrast, Bima villages which looked to the NA and the missionaries to build primary schools were left with very few primary schools. Consequently, there are very few educated people in the Bima region. Schools do not only guarantee each child the education she or he is entitled to, but might satisfy the economic needs of the population, ensuring that each child can contribute to the welfare of the Bima region and to the nation. The theatre performances that attempt to address this problem are examined in chapter one.

A further contrast to French rule was that the British administration did not permit female pupils who were either pregnant or nursing mothers to attend primary schools. Moreover, under the British administration, pupils who wanted to acquire western education beyond the primary school level had to attend higher institutions in Nigeria. However, very few pupils had the financial means to support themselves in Nigeria.

Thus unlike the French administration which boosted the number of primary schools and also introduced higher educational facilities in her mandate, the British administration did the opposite. Clearly, the contrasting policies of Britain and France towards education among their respective populations had long-lasting effects on the two mandates. First, whereas the French administration built its own schools, the British allowed the NA and the missions to manage primary schools. As a result, there were few primary schools in the British mandate and this affected the number of people who gained elite status. Considering that education is indispensable in development, French Cameroon was and is even today, more developed and educationally advanced than British Cameroon. Secondly, the British policy of preventing pregnant female pupils from attending schools had a devastating effect on female students. For example, many female students left school when they became pregnant. Hence, there were very few educated women in the English mandate as compared with the number of female students in the French mandate. Even today, the number of educated women in the

Anglophone zone is proportionately insignificant compared with those in the Francophone zone. Educated women in Mfou Sub-Division, for instance, outnumber those in Mundemba Sub-Division. Considering that education provides opportunities through which an individual can contribute to the society, widen her horizons and thus improve on her life-style, very few women in Mundemba Sub-Division enjoy this privilege.

Furthermore, whereas the French used western education as a means of assimilating the indigenous people into the French mode of life, the British administration had a contrasting plan; they did not intend to turn Cameroonians into Englishmen⁵.

The contrasting policies of Britain and France are prominent in the Anglophone and Francophone zones. For example, Francophones generally think of themselves as French citizens and want to emulate the French life-style, whilst Anglophones tend not to think of themselves as British citizens and do not imitate the British life-style. Mbuagbaw et al stated:

The French came to Africa on a 'civilisation mission', in so far as the colonies were regarded as France overseas (*La France d'outre mer*). The object was to make Cameroon a part of France itself, to persuade Africans to learn the French language, to read French newspapers, attend French schools and adopt French ways of thinking and living, and, in short, to turn them into Frenchmen. This was what a French coloniser had in mind when he said: 'France is a nation of one hundred inhabitants'. Those Africans whom the French did succeed in turning into Frenchmen became, on the whole, more loyal to France than British-educated Africans of the same class are to Britain (Mbuagbaw et al 1990: 94).

Moreover, besides the economic advantage which is one of the positive concomitants of western education, western education introduced European languages that could be the means of overcoming ethnic divisions. The French language became a unifying force amongst elites from different ethnic groups with different backgrounds in the French mandate. Taking into account the numerous vernaculars in Cameroon, the possibility of an indigenous elite becoming versed in all the languages was unthinkable. Therefore the acquisition of French equipped the elites in the former French mandate with a common means of expression among the members of different ethnic groups. English language served a similar purpose in the British mandate⁶.

Today, the two languages (English and French) are indispensable and they have become the official languages in Cameroon. The two languages have also united the educated people in the Anglophone and Francophone zones as many educated people understand both languages. Some educated Cameroonians who are only competent in one of the languages are zealously struggling to understand both languages. They are fully aware of the fact that to fit into the Cameroon system and genuinely attain a Cameroonian identity, one of the requirements is to have a competent knowledge of English and French languages. Thus like each territorial language which united the people of a given territory in Europe and created national sentiments (Anderson 1990), English and French languages serve similar roles in Cameroon.

However, the acquisition of English and French languages in Cameroon was at the time achieved through British and French systems of education. This is still the case today, given the foundations on which post-independence education was built. Considering that the majority of the population does not have the opportunity of acquiring any more than a rudimentary western education, Pidgin English is chosen as the medium of expression between distinct ethnic groups amongst the schooled and the unschooled. Pidgin English is a lingua-franca which serves as the down-to-earth means of communication particularly in the English-speaking zone. It is also used as a down-to-earth means of communication in certain parts in the Francophone region. For example, it is spoken extensively in Douala (the economic capital of Cameroon) and in Bafussam (the second most populous city in Cameroon).

Cameroon theatre practitioners are aware of the futility of using an indigenous language in a performance intended for all Cameroonians. Thus each theatre practitioner uses either English, French or Pidgin English, or a combination of the three languages as the medium of communicating a message. However, in order to retain ethnic or regional flavour in a performance, a playwright adds to the script or improvised performance words and phrases from his mother tongue. For instance, Bate Besong who comes from the Bayang ethnic group (an ethnic group in Manyu Division) adds Bayang words and phrases to his scripts.

Having discussed the advantages of western education, the disadvantages cannot be ignored. First, in view of the fact that elites were encouraged by the French

and British administrations and missions to regard their own traditional culture, religion and values with contempt, they were in effect destroying the roots of the indigenous people, and annihilating the sense of cultural, religious and more important, traditional educational heritage. The idea of a traditional system of education is used in this study to refer to the social activities (rites of transition, rituals, festivals, stories) through which a community (instructors, priests, priestesses, chiefs, elders, griots, professional story tellers) transmits its stock of knowledge and values to its members. The ultimate aim of them is to reinforce the people's morality and to integrate them in the community. Thus the values of the indigenous people were undermined by the British and French administrations, together with the missionaries when they attacked the traditional educational system. Moreover, western education failed to fill all the vacuums left by an impaired indigenous education. For example, rites of transition associated with gender, sex and motherhood were one important aspect of indigenous education that was ignored by western education. Thus in ignorance, female students die in the course of performing abortions. This issue is taken up and vigorously attacked in national performances discussed in chapter six.

Secondly, western education (particularly the French educational system) created a new class division within the French mandate. First, a group of elites considered themselves to be the class of the assimilated, and therefore alienated themselves from the uneducated who most needed their services and assistance. They also detested their traditional system of education which endowed their community with a sense of identity, and all that gave life a sense of meaning and direction. They completely estranged themselves from their own cultural roots and became like shrubs shivering in an unsuitable soil. They longed for a French life-style and western manufactured goods, and endeavoured vigorously to be absorbed into French culture. By contrast, this class was not so conspicuously marked out in British Cameroon (Mbuagbaw et al 1990: 93). This group is still prominent in the Francophone zone.

There was another group of elites who endeavoured to blend western and indigenous cultures. Today, some of the members in this group are performing artists who produce 'syncretic' theatre (a combination of imported theatre and traditional theatre), to borrow Kerr's term (Kerr, 1981: 151), as a means of articulating some of

the national controversial issues. They also use theatre as a means of reproaching the assimilated class, encouraging them to strengthen the Cameroon identity and to cherish Cameroon's life-style so that the country can progress. (These performances are discussed in chapters five and six) ⁷.

Thirdly, there was another group in the English-speaking zone who held tight to their traditional values. This group was made up of chiefs, traditional performing artists and some uneducated people. Today, the traditional performing artists use theatre to portray the people's disillusionment with post-independence realities and to encourage the people to develop themselves intellectually, and to improve their environments. For example, local performing artists in the Bima and Ngolo regions (in the English speaking zone) use performing arts as a medium through which they can articulate the villagers' problems and encourage the respective ethnic groups to strengthen their identity and also develop the regions. These performances are discussed in chapter one.

Having discussed the positive and negative concomitants of western education, I will briefly examine French and British administrations' economic policies in their respective zones.

I. ii. (b). ii The Influence of the Mandating Countries' Economic Policies in their Respective Zones.

The accessibility of western education in conjunction with geographical factors was instrumental in determining the different economic activities in the two mandates. In the French one, the educated people occupied a few privileged positions, the semi-educated filled the lower administrative posts. Also, the fertile soil attracted the bulk of the semi-educated and uneducated population to the farming occupation. For example, during my fieldwork in Mfou Sub-Division, I realised that the existence of fertile soil there has led the bulk of the uneducated and semi-educated indigenous population to engage in farming rather than the pursuit of higher education. Women who constitute the bulk of the semi-educated and uneducated cultivate food crops throughout the year. They engage in shifting cultivation. They cultivate their land without employing additional labour, and quite often they engage in njangi groups ⁸. They use hoes and

cutlasses and also practise mixed-cropping or multiple-cropping. Before western contact and the introduction of a western monetary system, the quantity of food produced was usually enough to feed a family. With the advent of burgeoning urban centres, the presence of roads and the need for cash, women have engaged in intensive agriculture aimed at the sale of surplus produce whilst men cultivate traditional cash crops such as cocoa ⁹. The women also assist men in harvesting cocoa pods (fruits), and then in breaking them, removing the beans, fermenting the beans and finally drying the beans in large ovens heated by firewood. Judging from the women's diverse agricultural activities (cultivating food crops and assisting men in cultivating and processing cash crops), I arrived at the conclusion that the village women are more active in agriculture than men in Mfou Sub-Division.

The women's active involvement in agriculture has led to several advantages. First, they provide sufficient food for their respective families, who are generally well nourished. They are not like the women described by FAO Information Department who grow food crops, yet are relatively malnourished because they wait for men to eat first while they and their children eat the remains ¹⁰. Secondly, as a consequence of the women's active role in agriculture and the high demand for food crops, they have acquired a certain degree of liberation and financial independence .

A village woman in Mfou Sub-Division uses cash earned from the sale of her food crops to purchase her family's basic necessities. Consequently, unlike the village women in other developing countries who cultivate food crops mainly for family consumption ¹¹, the village women in Mfou Sub-Division earn substantial income from the sales of their food crops. Thirdly, on occasions when traditional cash crops (cocoa and coffee) are not sold, it is the men who lose income while women's food crops are always in high demand.

In the city of Mfou where there is a great admixture of people from different provinces, together with foreigners, the people engage in different economic activities. Most indigenous women are particularly active in a trade commonly known as buyam sellam (a system whereby the women purchase a large quantity of food crops at wholesale prices from villages and retail the food in Mfou city at a profit). The buyam sellams form cartels and enjoy monopolistic powers over the distribution of food crops.

They have the power to raise prices irrespective of the consumers' protest. The buyam sellams will use violence against any customer who argues with any of their members. In this respect, their attitude is not much different from that of the market women in Accra who threaten their customers (Bebey, 1978: 1 - 22). The customers are usually very polite to the buyam sellams because they do not want to be beaten and stripped naked in the market.

Those women who do not take up the occupation of buyam sellam are either engaged in running off-licences, or are petty traders (who sell cooked food, roasted beef, chicken and fish along the roads), housewives, unemployed or unmarried. Semi-educated and uneducated men are either taxi drivers, operators of off-licences, petty traders or are unemployed. Most educated people (women and men) in Mfou Sub-Division are civil servants.

It is patently obvious that most women in Mfou Sub-Division are engaged in more economic activities than the men and their authority is respected by the locals. Chapters one and two examine women's theatrical performances that are concerned with the women's lot and the fate of farmers.

In Anglophone Cameroon, economic activities have been affected by the geographical position of the British mandate and the level of educational facilities. For example, the sandy and gravelly soil which is suitable for growing palm-trees attracted the Germans to establish the Pamol Industry plantations in Ndian Division. Moreover, the thick forest in Ndian Division has attracted World Wild Fund (WWF) to conserve the forest. Those who attended primary school are employed by Pamol industry and WWF to occupy subordinate administrative posts. Those who acquired western education beyond the primary school level work as senior administrators in the civil service, Pamol industry and WWF. Some of the semi-educated and educated indigenous people work in other parts of Cameroon, while the uneducated from the city and uneducated immigrants from neighbouring villages supply manual labour in the Pamol industry. They grow palm-trees, harvest the nuts and produce palm oil.

In contrast, 90% of the villagers, particularly the Bimas and Ngolos, are engaged in agriculture - farming, hunting and fishing. The sandy and gravelly soil of Bima region and the many trees make intensive agriculture difficult to practise. Hunting

has therefore remained the main occupation of the Bimas, and Bima men have been renowned hunters since time immemorial. The Bimas assert that they earn part of their income from the sales of bush meat, food crops and spices. Therefore they need large tracts of forest to carry out hunting activities and the gathering of vegetables and food. The Bimas maintain that the land which Pamol industry occupies was seized from their ancestors by the German administration, and that WWF is now preventing them from maximising the forest's natural resources. Meanwhile, the Bimas do not have a share in the Pamol industry's profit, nor does WWF provide the people with a substitute means of survival. Thus the government is seen as callous with regard to the plight of the indigenous people. In this respect, local performing artists in villages and cities portray the indigenous people's grievances, as well as their indifference to the government and World Wild Fund (WWF) in theatrical performances. These performances are examined in chapters one and two.

The soil in the Ngolo region is more fertile than that in the Bima region, and both men and women in the Ngolo have intensively engaged in farming. Ngolo men cultivate cash crops whilst the women assist men in this work.

Ngolo women catch enough fish for household consumption, particularly when meat is scarce, and also produce exquisite mats. They gather edible spices such as mango seeds, wild onions and other food and spices from the forest. Furthermore, the women are solely responsible for growing food crops; such as vegetables, fruits, plantains, cocoyams, cassava, beans, maize, banana, groundnuts and much else to feed themselves. The women clear the farms, burn the trees, hoe, weed and harvest the crops. They spend many hours on their farms. In addition, the women frequently work in njangi groups. Thus from time to time they roast food, eat, sing and chat about daily preoccupations. These activities interrupt the daily grind, and they do not work continuously. Because of this, the women seem to enjoy working on the land, and more importantly, they perceive working in the farms as a social gathering removed from the world of men. Also, working in the farm for long hours prevents tyrannical husbands being able to bully their wives.

Although the women's main income is from selling food crops, they cultivate only a small quantity of them. Since there are no tarred roads, the women can only

carry a small quantity of food crops on their heads when they trek to the local market at Mundemba where they make their trade.

Another source through which the Bima and Ngolo village women earn income is by transporting men's cash crops to Mundemba. Asked why they transported it when some of their food crops could not reach the local market, some women asserted that there was a warehouse and a storage facility for cash crops in Mundemba. In contrast, there was no storage facility for perishable food crops in Mundemba. Women engage in diverse economic activities, whereas the men only engage in cultivating cash crops and hunting expeditions.

The foregoing discussion again reveals that village women work harder and have greater involvement in agriculture than the village men. The values and ethics by which women are induced to work harder than men are, of course, inculcated at a very young age. Theoretically, village men in the Ngolo and Bima regions make the women believe that the women have the option to do what they want, such as transporting men's cash crops to Mundemba, cultivating food crops and preparing food for their husbands and kinsmen. Yet, practically any woman who fails to meet up with certain duties is considered a failure and may be despised and mocked by the entire community. The Bima and Ngolo village women share a similar plight with their counterparts in other societies. Ardener describes how the Bakweri men do not work on the farms but wait for their wives who do all the work in the farms to return from the farms and serve the men evening meals (Ardener 1972: 135 - 159). Also, Langness describes how the Bena Bena men force women to do what men require of them, and when it is required. Thus the Bena Bena women in New Guinea must work daily in the gardens, look after pigs, collect firewood, cook food and so on (Langness 1977: 16).

From the foregoing discussion, there is evidence that the women in Mundemba and Mfou Sub-Divisions engage more in economic activities than the men. Consequently, the women in both sub-divisions produce theatre performances which portray their plight as the bread-winners of the families. These performances are discussed in chapters one and two.

Given that the bulk of the population is made up of farmers, the country's revenue is heavily dependent on the income from cash crops. De Lancy wrote that

"although plantation agriculture continued to be important, peasant farmers became the main producers of export crops, notably cocoa" (De Lancy 1990: 707-10). The fall in the price of cash crops has tremendously affected the government's budget, and this has caused mass unemployment and also reduced government's expenditure on essentials such as education and health care. Also, the fall in the price of cash crops has drastically reduced farmers' income and this has created discontentment in villages. Consequently, concerned local performers depict these appalling issues in village, city, and national performances. In addition, given the importance of cash crops to Cameroon's gross national income, the negative effects of the unequal trade between Cameroon's cash crops and western manufactured goods are conspicuously depicted in a national performance discussed in chapter five.

I. ii. (c). i The Influence of the Mandating Countries' Political
Programmes in their Respective Zones.

Turning to the mandating countries' policy towards local politics, Britain and France implemented different policies in their respective mandates. For the purpose of illuminating certain issues which might seem obscure in some of the performances analysed in chapter one, I will briefly describe the political organizations in each mandate. I will examine Britain's and France's respective policies towards indigenous village and city politics, and later discuss the factors that led to the formation of national political parties which eventually took the two mandates into independence.

The British administration respected and utilized grassroots politics for the benefit of villages. The British allowed the village indigenous political organisations, such as secret societies and institutional chiefs to function within the framework of their administration. The administration allowed the chiefs, with the aid of the councillors and secret societies, to govern the people while the District Officer and the High Commissioner advised the local political units. These units consisted of the House of Chiefs, the Native Authority and the Customary Court. The British administration ruled the entire mandate through local political organisations (chiefs, the councillors and secret societies) and also acted as overseers (Mbuagbaw et al 1990: 91-5). This policy

is known as the indirect rule. Village politicians and indigenous elites were charged with the duty of governing villages, their respective regions, and providing the basic needs such as markets, roads, and primary schools in the villages and regions. This policy was known as self-reliance.

The policy of respecting and allowing local political organizations in villages to function remained intact. Today, for example, in Mundemba Sub-Division, the village chiefs, councillors and the secret societies play an important role in maintaining peace and order in villages. Consequently, a chief's role in a village development was and even today is indispensable. Due to this fact, the functions of a chief incessantly figure in theatrical performances in chapter one. Furthermore village performances are primarily concerned with political and economic development and again the chief's role here is central and figures in theatrical performances. However, in order to understand the village performances, a brief description of village political systems is relevant.

The Ngolo ethnic group is used to illustrate the process of making a chief in the region within the specific context of establishing a new village. Honourable Chief Nyelle Nyando maintains that amongst the Ngolos, in the pre-colonial period, new villages were founded for several reasons. For example, the present village might be under perpetual threat from warring neighbours, the land might be infertile, there might be an absence of water, or the village might be vulnerable to attack due to its position. In cases such as these the people have to emigrate to a new, more suitable site.

The process begins with seasonal hunters, especially those who hunt during the dry season, who observe the different areas where hunting activities take place. If they find a suitable site (accessibility to streams, the absence of violent neighbours, the presence of a high terrain where the eventuality of a surprise attack is greatly lessened), the hunters throw seeds and the remains of their food in the area. If the food grows vigorously the hunters continue with the routine for a couple of years for the purpose of ensuring that the land is fertile. Satisfied with the discovery, they reveal their findings to the entire village. Some villagers are asked to accompany the hunters to the new site. Nevertheless, even when the emissaries return with positive findings, the observation continues for a couple of years for the people want to be convinced that the new site is suitable.

However, such findings are not sufficient justification for emigration. People must placate the gods of the forest and rivers (so as to avoid accidents and other calamities) with sacrifices. Furthermore, according to the people's tradition, two dignitaries (people who have exhibited the values of the community) provide the sacrifice, and eventually become the founders and leaders of the new village. Having emigrated to the new village, the people democratically create rules which are respected by the entire community.

The above discussion reveals that it is those individuals who epitomise the values of community and who also provide the sacrifices that are instantly elected new leaders. Probably there are many individuals who have shown great respect for the culture in the community. Thus, the act of selecting some cultured individuals in preference to others constitutes the threshold of political activity. Furthermore the policy of selecting men of integrity reveals that Ngolos expect a high standard of moral ethics from its members. Thus anyone aspiring to become a leader or to be included in the class of dignitaries and traditional intellects must strive for moral uprightness.

However, the two leaders who provide the sacrifices must be determined to work for the well-being of the entire community, each has his individual priorities, and strives to win popular support by making known his respective manifesto to the community. The winner becomes the undisputed leader of the village, while the loser combines two roles: keeper of the village's seal and the duty of pouring libation on important occasions. This mode of dual organization contrasts with the Bakweri system where the village is divided amongst its founders. Mutute maintains that:

The Bakwerians have a policy of dividing a village into two called Upper (Lelu), Middle (Teni) and Lower (Mbenge). For example, Ekona Lelu and Ekona Mbenge, Wonjongo wo Lelu, Wonjongo wo Teni and Wonjongo wo Mbenge. The reason for this division has been given that two brothers might have founded the village and each one decided to carve out a section to administer (Mutute 1988: 16)

Another means of choosing a chief occurs when a village is faced with violent inter-village or tribal wars and decides to emigrate instantly to an unknown site. In this case, the chief is chosen among eloquent orators by a council of dignitaries. However, irrespective of how a chief is chosen, a village is always named after its founders. For

example, the names of Manja Okia and Makango Orume villages allude to the settlement of Manja and Makango which were founded by Okia and Orume respectively. Presently, amongst the Bima and Ngolo ethnic groups, chieftaincy rotates between the offspring of the founders of the village depending on the personal integrity and ambitions of each individual. Any offspring of a late chief who is chosen by the people to succeed his late father is installed by the Sub-Divisional Officer.

The chief represents his village in external affairs, he presides over the Village Council and is the leader of secret societies such as the ekwe society. It is asserted that mgbe (the secret object of the ekwe society) was founded by a group of Efik women in Eastern Nigeria who were fishing in a river. The women found an object which made the sound 'mmm'. Initially, they were frightened, but nevertheless, they brought the object to the leaders of the village. Men examined the object, realized that the dignitaries of the society could use it as a weapon through which they could impose discipline and influence over men who have not taken up titles, as well as over women and children. With this view in mind and in order to prevent the women from revealing the object's secret, the dignitaries executed the group of women who discovered it.

Men named the object mgbe and constituted the ekwe society to govern the secret. The ekwe society today is the highest organisation which co-ordinates and upholds political activities in the village. It is used to maintain order and peace, and to impose discipline and to solidify men's dominant position. The members of the ekwe society built a house for mgbe and called it etana (Palaver House). The residence (etana) is a long hall with a platform. A curtain separates the platform from the level floor. The walls are half completed which allows ventilation. There are long pillars which support the roof. The halls are roofed with zinc, even those in the most remote villages, but there are no ceilings. Seats are lined on both sides and other seats face the entrance. A table covered with a cloth is placed in front of the seats facing the entrance. There is a short stout pillar a few metres from the entrance which is called gvolale etana (the heart of etane). Etana is the most important political venue in the village. Having built etana, members of the ekwe society fetched mgbe from the river where it was found. However, mgbe is only brought out when there is a major controversial issue

confronting the village or during a great occasion that symbolises an important political event. The procedure of fetching mgbe is described in chapter one.

In theory, the conspicuous position of etana at the centre of the village symbolises unity, political stability and discipline. It serves polytheistic villagers equally as a church serves a Christian society. Consequently, the absence of etana in a village symbolises political chaos and the absence of discipline. In such villages, village performing artists depict the consequences of political instability in theatre. These performances are discussed in chapter one.

The Village Council is made up of dignitaries and respectable commoners. The council's duty is to settle minor issues, for example, theft, adultery and so on.

As earlier indicated, the policy that the British administration established has largely remained intact insofar as a village chief, the village council and the secret society are still charged with maintaining law and order and with providing roads, schools and other facilities in a village. These responsibilities become, then, the focus of theatre productions in villages. Theatre is thus used as a medium to encourage the building of roads and schools, to mock and criticise human foibles as well as to show indifference to the government officers when they visit the villages. Such theatrical performances are discussed in chapter one.

The District Officer and the High Commissioner are now replaced by the Senior-Divisional officer, whilst the House of Chiefs, the Native Authority and the Customary Court are replaced by different political units, such as the Meeting of the Clan's Chiefs, the Grand Meeting of the Clans' Chiefs and the Divisional Development Meeting. The Meeting of the Clan's Chiefs creates an opportunity for the chiefs of a clan to meet and share their administrative and political experiences. The meeting also enables the chiefs to discuss the political, social, economic and development issues in their region. Consequently, when an issue requiring the attention of the the Bima chiefs arises, the President of Bima Cultural Union for Development (BICUL) organises a meeting for the Bima chiefs. For instance, the President of BICUL organised a meeting for the Bima chiefs on the 3rd November 1990. Its issue was to persuade the chiefs to re-examine their roles in the Bima region, to reinforce the solidarity of the Bima

identity, and thus to motivate the Bimas to engage in development projects, such as the bulldozing of a road in the region.

The Grand Meeting of the Clans' Chiefs comprises all of the chiefs in Mundemba Sub-Division. The meeting enables the chiefs to consolidate the clans' identity in terms of their culture and values as well as enhancing the importance of chiefs. The meeting also creates an opportunity for the chiefs to meet and share their administrative and political experiences and to discuss political, social and economic development issues. When there is an issue which requires prompt attention of all the chiefs of the different groups, any of the paramount chiefs can summon the other chiefs for the purpose of discussion.

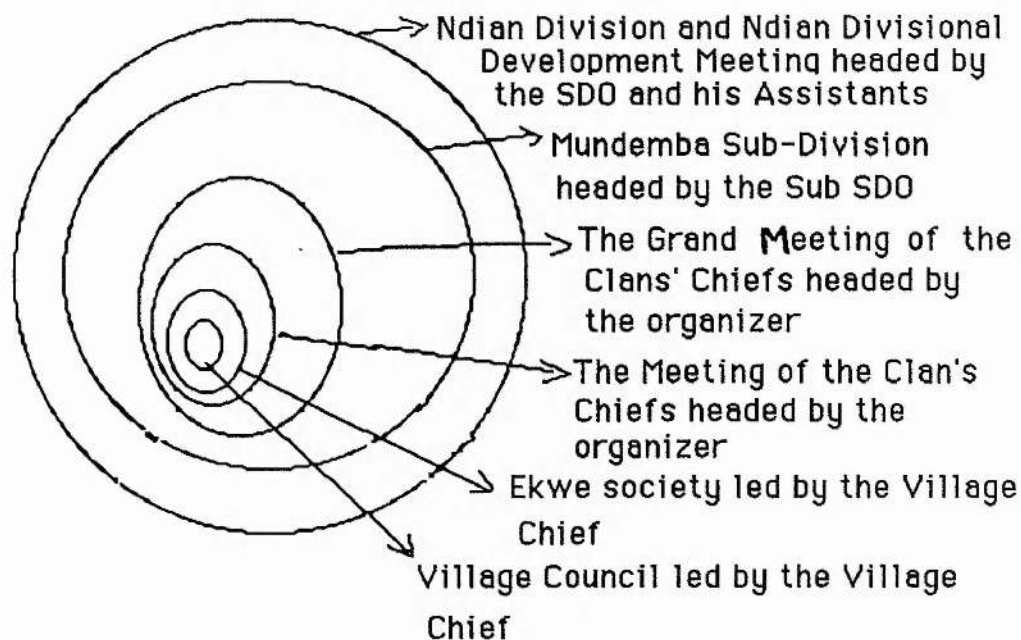
The Grand Meeting of the Clans' Chiefs was held on the 22nd of November 1990 at Mundemba, and it was organised by Honourable Chief Iyelle Johnson Nyando of the Ngolo clan. He is also the Sub-Section President of Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) party. He maintained that the pivotal purpose of the conference was to consolidate and sensitize militants of the CPDM party to the principles and ideologies of the CPDM. Therefore the central motive of the meeting was to campaign on behalf of the CPDM party which was standing against opposition parties. During the conference, the CPDM Sub-Section President endeavoured vigorously to lobby the chiefs to remain loyal militants of the CPDM party. He stressed that unlike other African countries such as Nigeria and Ghana, which have had a series of coups d' etat since independence, Cameroon has enjoyed political stability as a result of the one party-system. In spite of his persuasion, the chiefs' opinions polarised against those of the Sub-Section President. They aptly pointed out that the CPDM party has failed to respect the promises (such as tarring the road from Kumba to Mundemba) made to the people of Ndian Division and that the Division is untouched by modern development. Therefore although the pivotal motive of the meeting was to convince the chiefs to remain loyal CPDM militants, the chiefs could not easily be won over by the CPDM Sub-Section President.

Another political organisation is the Divisional Development Meeting (DDM). It co-ordinates development activities in all the Sub-Divisions that make up Ndian Division. The recent Divisional Development Meeting was held on the 19th of

December 1990, at the council hall at Mundemba. The aim of the meeting was to implore indigenous politicians, government administrators and businessmen to develop Ndian Division. The Senior-Divisional Officer (Mr Nzegge) who presided over the meeting, opened it by calling on indigenous politicians to unite for the purpose of promoting development in the division.

These different meetings enable village theatre practitioners in the respective regions to become aware of development projects in other regions. Some local theatre practitioners derive the themes of their theatrical performances from these meetings, and they use the themes to produce theatre that deals with the concerns of their respective groups. Two such performances are discussed in chapter one.

As is obvious from the above, village and city politics are interwoven. A division is headed by a Senior-Divisional Officer. The division is also divided into Sub-Divisions headed by Sub-Divisional officers. Each Sub-Division is made up of villages and each village is headed by a chief. In each village there is a village council and the ekwe society headed by a village chief. The chiefs of each clan have formed the Meeting of the Clan's Chiefs, while the chiefs of the various clans have created the Grand Meeting of the Clans' Chiefs. Lastly, there is the Divisional Development Meeting. In this respect, a political organization at the lower echelons relies on the immediate political organization in the hierarchy to protect its interests at the higher level. For example, the village council and the ekwe society expect the village chief to protect the village's interest in the Meeting of the Clan's Chiefs. Thus politics begins at the village level and ascends to the divisional level. (See illustration).

Fig 1 Different political units and their leaders.

In contrast to the British administration, the French administration introduced a political system with less regard for indigenous politics. Unlike the British administration which respected indigenous politics and left grass roots politics intact, the French administration destroyed political secret societies and shunned legitimate indigenous *chefs*.

The French administration to a much greater extent replaced legitimate indigenous *chefs* with puppet *chefs* (people who supported the French administration). For example, *Chef* Atangana was chosen as a rightful *chef* in the Central Province. He implemented France's policies even to the detriment of his own people. He further abused his position by forcing villagers to work in his plantations. Although his malpractices were reported to the administration, no action was taken against him (Le Vine, 1964: 107), because his actions fitted the purposes of the French administration. Wieschhoff observed that "traditional African institutions have value only insofar as they serve the purposes of [French] administration" (Wieschhoff cited in Le Vine 1964: 90).

Today the descendants of the ancestral puppet *chefs* are recognised by villagers and Divisional Officers (these divisional officers have replaced one of the functions of

the French administration). Following the chieftaincy law of 1977, members of a ruling family and the village dignitaries meet and select a *chef* from a ruling family. Reports of such meetings are drawn up and signed by all the participants. The result is then forwarded to the *Sous-Prefet* who might disapprove or approve of the choice depending on the individual's attitude towards the government. If the individual is in favour of the government, an installation ceremony is then organised and the *Sous-Prefet* formerly installs and presents the *chef* to his subjects amidst much celebration marked by dancing, eating and drinking. Following this system, every decision by the *chef* is taken in the interests of the government. The *chefs* support the government and they are instrumental in promoting the government's interest in villages, and are indispensable to government administration. In return, *chefs* enjoy other special privileges, and are protected by the central government administration. Nevertheless, the people can be highly instrumental in the dethroning of a *chef* who ignores their basic needs, such as requesting the government to supply pipe-borne water and to establish a primary school in the village. Also, an irresponsible and juvenile village *chef* may be the target of criticism which results in physical attack by his subjects.

The *chefs* ' primary duty is to maintain peace and order at the village level. However, since the French administration destroyed secret political organisations and also replaced legitimate *chefs* with puppet *chefs*, the *chefs* in Mfou Sub-Division do not have overarching political organizations, such as the ekwe society in Mundemba Sub-Division, which might serve to coordinate and effect disciplinary actions on members and non-members alike. However, a small degree of discipline is exercised by minor associations which are formed either exclusively by women or by men, or else jointly. The actions of such organisations bind only the respective members. These associations take the form of njangi groups, but they do not have effective sanctions for exercising discipline on unruly members. For example, if a member of a njangi group commits a crime, other members, particularly the leader insists that she pays a fine. Failure to do so will result in her expulsion from the group. But she is not ostracized from the village. Consequently, the degree of cohesion of the associations is not great and discipline is only partially effective. Furthermore, there are no resident police posts in the villages. All these factors explain why a *chef* is obliged to refer some cases

which he cannot settle to the higher government administrators, such as the *Sous-Prefet* who studies the case and decides accordingly. For example, occasionally even minor crimes (as they are considered locally) such as theft, adultery, rape, fornication, sacrilegious or recalcitrant behaviour are referred to police or gendarme officers. The latter will then come to the village and escort the culprit to their base for the necessary proceedings. The gendarmerie might refer the issue to the *Sous-Prefet* who might also refer the issue to the *Assistant Prefet*, and eventually the case might be referred to the *Prefet*. There is, therefore little effective machinery at the village level for exercising discipline and local leaders have to appeal to outside authorities.

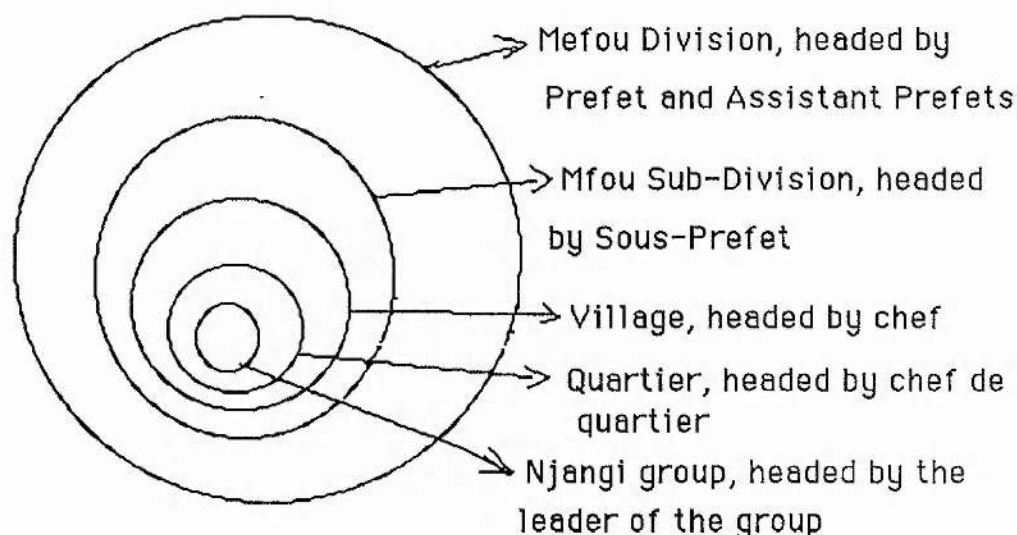
A Division is administered by a *Prefet*. The *Assistant Prefets* deal with minor issues that affect the entire Division. Furthermore, in the absence of the *Prefet*, the *Assistant Prefets* perform his duties. Each division is divided into Sub-Divisions and each sub-Division is headed by a *Sous-Prefet*. The *Sous-Prefets* are charged with the responsibility of maintaining peace and order in Mfou Sub-Division and to submit monthly administrative reports to the *Prefets*. Each of the sub-divisions consists of a headquarters and its constituent villages. For example, Mfou Sub-Division is administered by a combination of different political units. *Chefs* administer their respective villages whereas the *chefs de quartiers* administer their quarters in their particular villages. The following are the administrative positions hierarchically arranged: *Prefet*, *Assistant Prefets*, *Sous Prefets*, *Chefs*, *Chefs de quartier*.

This discussion of politics has concentrated on men's political activities; it is essential to examine women's groups since they play a prominent role in the maintenance of peace and order in the society. The women have formed groups such as njangi groups where they exercise a degree of administrative and judicial power. For example, the market women group settles disputes among its members and expels recalcitrant members from the group. There are very few women in Mfou and Mundemba Sub-Divisions who participate in men's politics, only those women representatives of Cameroon People's Democratic Party. Even then, their power is limited. Women are neither Divisional Officers nor Chiefs. Women, therefore do not participate in the formal politics of the public administration. Consequently, one of the means through which the women can express political opinions is in theatre. Thus

during my fieldwork in Mfou and Mundemba Sub-Divisions, I witnessed that the women dominated theatrical activities in the regions. Moreover, national theatre practitioners are using theatre to call on women to take an active part in national politics. These performances are discussed in chapters one, two and four.

On the whole, the political hierarchy in Mefou Division consists of *Prefets*, *Assistant Prefets*, *Sous-Prefets*, *Chefs*, *Chefs de quartier* and *njangi* groups. (See illustration).

Fig. 2 Political units and the heads



It is worth noting that the French government did not rely on development from below. The *chefs* and the villagers in the French mandate were not encouraged by the French administration to carry out their own development projects such as building markets, bulldozing roads and building schools in the villages. Rather, *chefs* were made to look up to the French administrators to supply the villagers with basic necessities. For this reason, they did not openly criticise the French administrators. In contrast, chiefs and villagers in the British mandate were encouraged to carry out development projects in the villages as well as in the regions, and were to an extent independent of the British administration. Even when the mandating countries left Cameroon, their respective political legacies have remained intact in the former

respective zones. For example, theatre practitioners in Mundemba Sub-Division produce theatre which encourages villagers to initiate development projects and which overtly portrays the people's indifference to the government when the government is blind to the problems of villagers. In Mfou Sub-Division, by contrast, village theatre practitioners use theatre as a means through which they can celebrate the government's achievements as well as indirectly depicting its failures. These performances are discussed in chapters one and two.

Also, whilst many theatre performances in the Anglophone zone are aimed at instigating self-help development projects, local performers in the villages in Mfou Sub-Division use theatre as a means of conveying messages through divisional officers to the rulers of the country. These performances are discussed in chapter one.

Having briefly described the mandating countries' policies towards village and town politics and the impact of their policies on the respective mandates, I will briefly examine the intricate factors that led to the emergence of national political organizations which took the respective mandates into independence.

I. ii. (c). ii The Emergence of National Political Parties and the Attainment of Independence.

First, in the French mandate, the labourers and indigenous people felt discontentment over administrators' harsh practices, (such as the imposition of forced labour, heavy taxation, arbitrary imprisonments, conscription, floggings, the insincerity of the policy of assimilation) which incessantly irritated the elites. Second, only a few indigenous elites were allowed to participate in the discussions about Cameroonian political and economic issues, and they were to serve the French administration's interests, rather than the people's interests. These two factors, amongst others led the people to a demand for self government (Ngoh 1988: 112-124).

Also, the elites who were already imbued with a political consciousness united and created political organisations such as Jeunesse Camerounaise Française (Jeucafra), founded in 1938. Some of the members of Jeucafra, such as Nyobe, believed that Jeucafra's main purpose was to react against their unfair treatment by the French

administration. Jeucafra was to serve as the people's organization through which local politicians could articulate Cameroonian interests and concerns. The elites' political activities concord with Coleman's assertion that Western education was one of the most important influences during colonial administration, and very instrumental in the creation of a class of African elites who were to replace foreign rule (Coleman quoted in Le Vine 1964: 69).

The French administration had never intended to grant the mandate independence (Mbuagbaw et al, 1990: 94 and Le Vine 1964: 88-89), yet, several factors led France to support these indigenous political parties. For example, some of the members of Jeucafra were pro-French and thought that the main objective of the party was to react against the return of Cameroon to Germany (Ngoh 1988: 123-4).

Furthermore, events of the Second World War precipitated the formation of new political parties in the mandates. For instance, United Nations (U.N.) constantly pressurized the mandating countries to grant the mandates independence (Gardinier 1963). Also, the French government was faced with the trauma of the subsequent events of the Second World War in France (*ibid*: 125-132). Lastly, the indigenous people wanted independence and could only articulate their desire for independence under the cover of political parties. New political parties emerged, and old ones were transformed and took up new names. For example, the Jeunesse Camerounaise Française merged with the Union Camerounaise (U.C.) and was headed by Ahidjo from the North of the country. The newly formed political organizations included: the Démocrates Camerounais (D.C) led by Mbida from Centre Province and Paysans Independent (P.I.) headed by Djoumessi from the west (*ibid*: 1988: 133-161).

These political organizations were strictly ethnic and regional. The parties contended among themselves for the purpose of winning popular support. Union des Populations du Cameroun (U.P.C.) headed by Nyobe drew members from all the regions and ethnic groups, and seemed to be the only party that exhibited any national features (*ibid*: 140). Nyobe's attempts to unite all the political organizations into one huge organization failed. Rivalry within the parties continued. This was inflamed by the French administration which flirted with the contending parties by supporting the party which served France's interests at any given time. Their policy was aimed at destroying

political parties whose primary concern was to serve the interests of the nation. Nyobe (the pro-nationalist and founder of the Union des Populations du Cameroun (U.P.C.) lost the support of the French administration in 1955, when he called for the end of French trusteeship over French Cameroon as well as immediate granting of independence. He was succeeded by Prime Minister Mbida (leader of the Démocrates Camerounais) who was willing to cooperate with the French. However, when Mbida advocated that French Cameroon should maintain its status as a trustee territory, and not integrate with the French Republic, he was deposed in favour of Ahidjo, who was willing to cooperate with the French (Ngoh 1988: 144-151). Thus, French policy towards national politics was not different from their policies towards village politics (see page 27). The Union Camerounaise (U.C.) led by Ahidjo and supported by the French administration became the winner in the contest. It thus led French Cameroon into independence in 1960. On the eve of independence, even those whose opinions differed from those of U.C. kept aside their differences and joined in the celebration - after all, Cameroonians' primary concern was to be freed from France's domination (Le Vine 1964: 190).

Clearly, France has had an enormous influence on past and present Cameroon's politics and in choosing Cameroon's leaders. Concerned and patriotic Cameroonians, such as national theatre practitioners, disapprove of France's present intervention in Cameroon's politics. They depict this disapproval in national performances. These performances are examined in chapters three, five and six.

In the end, because of the emergence of these political parties, pressure from the UNO and the traumatic effects of the Second World War on France, the French government reluctantly granted her mandate independence.

Turning to the British mandate, many factors led to the formation of indigenous political parties in the British Mandate. The British administered its mandate jointly with Nigeria under the pretext that it was inconvenient to administer the mandate as a separate entity. Therefore all matters concerning South Cameroon were reported to the Chief Commissioner of the Eastern Province of Nigeria (*Ibid*: 193 and Ngoh 1988: 163). Furthermore, Britain thought that the mandate would join independent Nigeria instead of independent French Cameroon. Meanwhile, Southern Cameroon's elites

wanted the mandate to be administered as an autonomous state. Moreover, the revenue which the central government of Nigeria allocated for Southern Cameroon and Eastern Nigeria was monopolised by the latter (Ngho 1990: 86). In addition, the British administration distrusted Southern Cameroon's elites, and this pushed the elites into developing a sense of nationalism (Mbuagbaw et al 1990: 93).

These factors led Southern Cameroon's elites (Kale, Endeley and Foncha) to form a political party called the Cameroon Youth League (CYL), on 27th March 1940 (Ngho 1990: 28). Later members became interested in Nigerian national political organizations. Because of this interest, CYL was abandoned and its members (Kale, Endeley and others) became founders of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) in August 1944 (*ibid*) headed by Azikiwe. However, in spite of the presence of Cameroon politicians and their desire to participate in Nigerian national politics, they were not given the chance. Endeley and his peers opposed the political system that refused to take Southern Cameroons' interests into account. Consequently, they broke off from the NCNC and formed the Cameroon National Federation (CNF) in May 1949 (*ibid*). Other political parties emerged particularly in Southern Cameroon. Amongst these was Kamerun United National Congress (KUNC) headed by Dibongue and Mbile. These two parties (CNF and KUNC) were in conflict as each wanted to win popular support. Later they reconciled their differences and fused into a single party which came to be known as Kamerun National Congress (KNC) (*ibid*: 32). Southern Cameroon intended to become an autonomous state (Ngho 1988: 218), but she needed international economic and political support, notably from Britain and the United Nations.

But Britain wanted Southern Cameroon to join Nigeria. Britain insisted that many of the best friends of British Cameroon did not foresee a destiny more likely to promote her happiness and prosperity than integration with Nigeria (Ngho 1990: 171). Britain failed to realise that the Igbo immigrants (an ethnic group from Nigeria) dominated trade in Southern Cameroons and were becoming very unpopular (*ibid*: 232). During the Meeting of the Bima Chiefs of 3rd November 1990, Honourable Nwalinpenja of Batanga ethnic group (in Mundemba Sub-Division) explained that the Igbos from Nigeria were very unhelpful towards the local people. He said, for

example, that when an indigenous woman mistakenly touched a piece of cloth, an Igbo trader forced her to buy it. Furthermore, when a local person purchased a coconut and later discovered that it was rotten, the Igbo trader refused to exchange the coconut or to refund the money. Given the Igbos' attitude towards Cameroonians, when Endeley (one of the founders of National Council of Nigerians and Cameroons - NCNC) advocated a political union between Nigeria and Cameroon, the indigenous Southern Cameroonians accused him of wanting to sell Southern Cameroons to the Igbos.

Yet Britain was not ready to provide economic support to an autonomous independent Southern Cameroon. It was mentioned earlier that before the scramble for Africa, Cameroon had requested Britain, instead of Germany or France to occupy Cameroon. But Britain was not interested. Even when part of the country came under Britain's mandate, Britain maintained her indifference towards Cameroon. Perhaps this explains why Britain would not protect the interest of Cameroon as the French did in French Cameroon. Consequently, English-speaking Cameroon could not look to Britain for assistance as French-speaking Cameroon could look to France. British Cameroon ultimately felt that she was treated like an orphan by Britain, and consequently turned to UN for protection.

UN's attitude towards Southern Cameroon was influenced by one dominant factor. UN wanted Southern Cameroons' politicians and the political parties to resolve their differences, and perhaps become an independent nation. However, Cameroonian politicians who represented Southern Cameroons at the UN organised conferences could not resolve their differences. The chiefs (such as Chief Nyenti of Mamfe), fon Achirimbi 11 and renowned politicians wanted Southern Cameroon to attain the full status of an independent state. At a conference (organised by Cameroonians) in Bamenda, the chiefs and fons reminded delegates who wanted Southern Cameroon to join independent French Cameroon that they had "rejected Endeley because he wanted to sell Southern Cameroons to Nigeria and would not join French Cameroon. They emphasized their desire to attain independence as an autonomous nation" (Ngoh 1990: 175). Jua (a local politician) also argued that if Gambia with a population of 250,000 could be considered as a political entity in its own right, he did not see why Southern Cameroons, with a larger population, should not be considered a separate political

entity in its own right (*ibid.*: 175). Given the differences of opinion among Southern Cameroons' politicians, the conferences headed by UN failed in their attempt to persuade these leaders to reach a compromise.

Consequently, the United Nations had no option other than to advise Southern Cameroons to choose either to join independent Nigeria or independent French Cameroon. A plebiscite was organised under UN auspices which asked the following questions. The questions were framed like this:

- "(1) Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent Federation of Nigeria?
 (2) Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent Republic of Cameroon? (Ngoh 1988: 217).

The results of the plebiscite were in favour of reunification with independent Cameroon.

	For Nigeria	For Cameroon
Southern Cameroons	97741	233571 (Mbuagbaw, et al 1990: 121)

Southern Cameroon thus became reunited with French Cameroon and the Federal Republic of Cameroon came into existence in February 1961. The chapter on two Cameroons (French and British Mandates) was closed, and today the former French mandate is called Francophone or French-speaking Cameroon, whilst former British mandate is called Anglophone or English-speaking Cameroon (see map number 2 for illustration). In this study, Anglophone and English-speaking Cameroon are used interchangeably, and this applies also to Francophone and French-speaking Cameroon. Also, today the Francophones use the spelling 'Cameroun', whilst the Anglophones use, 'Cameroon'. Cameroonians who think of the German administration with nostalgia spell the name 'Kamerun'. The reunification between Francophone and Anglophone proved that the period of German administration has not been completely obliterated, and the fact that there are two official languages perpetually reminds Cameroonians that at one time, in the era of German administration they were one country.

From the analysis, it is obvious that indigenous elites in Cameroon were not different from their counterparts in other parts of the globe, who constructed on to their

respective groups the meaning of a collective purpose (Anderson 1990), and took their respective countries into independence.

The reunification of English and French-speaking Cameroons was in a sense a testing ground of two former colonies which have passed through different experiences under different colonial countries, but opted to merge for the purpose of achieving socio-economic advancement and political awareness. One of the concerns of this study is to examine how national theatre practitioners use theatre as one of the means of encouraging Cameroonians to strengthen national identity and to develop the young nation.

I. ii. (c). iii. Post-Independence Cameroon.

After President Ahidjo took the country into independence, he dissolved all the political opposition parties and established a single-party (Le Vine 1964 and Ngoh 1990: 224-6). He created an authoritarian government and the people were prevented from making their views known. The explicit expression of Cameroonians' views was suppressed, and people were forced to present their grievances in a careful manner for fear of being arrested by the security officers. Even performing artists who use theatre to articulate delicate issues in the community or to a wider audience were heavily monitored, as President Ahidjo's government censored scripts, productions and performances. Doho, the national playwright, producer and director meekly criticised the censorship: "Le théâtre Camerounais s'oriente vers le comique. Et ce rire deviendra bouffonnerie avec l'indépendance" (Doho 1989: 149-154).

Due to the President's authoritarian regime, he and his party became exceedingly powerful and were unchallengeable. Nevertheless, his political vision created political stability which led to a stable growth in the gross national product.

Writers wrote:

Cameroon has long been considered a positive example for modern African nations. Its solid economy, its food self-sufficiency and its political stability made it a case in point for the possible success in African nation building. This all the more, since the early and momentous division of the country by British and French apparently did not restrain the evolution of the country into a modern state (Delancy et al quoted in Probst, 1991: 287-289).

However, in November 1982, a new political phase dawned in the annals of Cameroon history when President Ahidjo unexpectedly announced his resignation and appointed President Biya to become his successor. Cameroonians were disconcerted since Ahidjo had become the pillar of the country and was the architect of Cameroon independence. His resignation led Biyiti bi Essam to question why a person who has become a semi-god, the son of Cameroon, the father of the Nation, the architect of former French and British Cameroons unification, one of the founders of African History, a man with a brilliant political career should resign (Biyiti bi Essam 1984: 15). However, the intricacies that led to his resignation are not yet made known to many Cameroonians. In an interview with Cameroon Tribune, Ahidjo said:

After a long time in power, I was feeling tired. My general condition (of health) therefore needed medical consultation. The doctors consulted felt that I needed a lot of rest. I therefore decided to accept their opinion (Ahidjo quoted in Ngoh 1988: 301).

On his succession to the Presidency, Biya introduced a new political direction in Cameroon. President Biya advocated freedom of expression, constructive criticisms and development of intellect:

Reflechissez, analysez, écoutez la radio, lisez le journal, refusez de croire ceux qui n'ont pas autorité et compétence pour vous informer (Biya quoted in Cameroon Tribune, No 3080 du Septembre 1984).

President Biya's political vision reached its climax in the late 1980s as a result of his tackling a number of the burning issues and problems that the country had experienced since independence in 1960. The Biya years witnessed the emergence of a multi-party system and restoration of the people's "total freedom" of expression which is exercised with an increasing popular zeal. It is this freedom of expression that enabled and continues to enable local performing artists to produce performances which depict the socio-economic and political realities of their country. A keen observer of Cameroon politics believes that these years, particularly 1990, are marked indelibly in the annals of Cameroon history. In his article entitled 'Cameroon's Year of Political Revolution' he wrote:

The year 1990 goes down in Cameroon's political history as specially eventful. After the turbulent years of the independence period, 1990 singles out itself as an outstanding year through the plethora of political decisions that challenged a political system that has known no change

in 30 years. Events in 1990 were contradictory! Who, at the beginning of the year could have believed that by December [1990] Cameroon will operate under a new system of political pluralism? (Nkendem 1991 No 1091).

However, freedom of expression has not spared even the President (the architect of freedom of expression) from criticism. He claims to be one of President Mitterrand's best pupils:

Je suis parmi les meilleurs élèves de President Mitterrand
(Biya quoted in Cameroon Post No 65 April 1991).

Given this open assertion and considering the coincidence of the political events (first, the rise of President Mitterrand - a socialist, second, the resignation of late President Ahidjo - a capitalist and lastly, the rise of President Paul Biya - a socialist), It might be suggested that perhaps Ahidjo was manoeuvred to resign.

This background to the national political scene is important to the study of national theatrical performances which criticise irresponsible leaders and denounce foreign intervention in Cameroon's economic and political activities. These performances are analysed in chapters three and five.

Another aspect of modern Cameroon which is the subject of theatrical expression is the lingering feeling of abandonment felt by Anglophones after reunification . From the inception of the reunification between former French and British mandates, many Anglophones thought that the reunion was based on mutual respect. However, post-reunification realities proved that French-speaking Cameroonians have less respect for them than the Anglophones had wished (Ngoh 1990: 200-226). This is partly due to what is perceived as Britain's attitude towards Anglophones. That is English-speaking Cameroonians hold the view that they are treated like orphans in an independent Cameroon, just as they were orphaned by the British. Concerned Anglophone national theatre practitioners are maximising the freedom of expression to articulate the Anglophone plight in national performances. These performances are discussed in chapter three.

The changes that the people thought would instantly accompany President Paul Biya's era in office are only being slowly realized. For example, only footpaths lead to villages in Mundemba Sub-Division and the road linking Mundemba (the headquarters of Ndian Division) and Kumba (the headquarters of Meme Division) is untarred. The

road has many depressions and muddy holes which road engineers have named 'patches'. Even four-wheel drive vehicles have great difficulties in passing the road during the rainy season; indeed, heavy trucks have to be brought in frequently to pull them out of the mud. Occasionally, drivers prefer to carry male passengers who are capable of pushing vehicles when they become bogged down in the mud. There are no recreational facilities in Mundemba city, and the people of Mundemba do not receive Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV) programmes. In view of the few recreational and infrastructural facilities in Mundemba city, the post-independence realities and the restored freedoms of expression, local performing artists (particularly women and students) in Mundemba city have resorted to theatre as a means of entertainment, a means of criticising moral decadence and human vices and above all, as a way of encouraging the people to develop intellectually and also to engage in concrete development projects.

In Mfou Sub-Division, local women, pupils, teachers and students also use theatre to entertain the inhabitants of Mfou as well as to depict the appalling post-independence realities in the country. Theatre serves dual functions. First, it is used as a means of entertainment. Second, it is used as a means through which people articulate their desires, complaints and philosophy. Schechner refers to these dual functions as 'efficacy' and 'entertainment' (Schechner 1983: 311-324). In the case of the performances I observed in Cameroon, efficacy is especially important.

It is worth noting that without a conducive political milieu, local theatre practitioners could not express their concerns in theatre. For example, the censorship of speech and control of information by late President Ahidjo eliminated constructive criticisms and the introduction of positive new ideas from political opponents, theatre practitioners and others. Thus the people's zeal to develop an incipient nation and nationhood were destroyed. With the rise of President Paul Biya in 1982 and his advocacy of freedom of expression, a reduction of censorship and of the control of information have all led to a gradual awakening of the silent community which characterised Cameroon society. In this respect the people are not leaving any stone unturned. There is an increasing zeal in the search for truth and genuine change through a questioning attitude which is manifested in populists' manifestoes, public meetings,

street demonstrations and the media of television, radio and newspaper. This study shows how the performing arts are not exempted. Indeed, theatre at all levels is an active medium in which the issues of political identity and notions of development are articulated. Village, city and national theatre practitioners are maximising the freedom of expression by using theatre as a means of demystifying and unravelling village, city and national controversial issues (such as women's plight and Anglophones' plight) with a view of creating a sense of nationhood, as well as developing socially and economically the rural and urban areas and the nation alike.

Also, as a result of the return of the freedom of speech, the audiences I watched during my fieldwork commented time and again about the actions on stage, sharing their thoughts about how the performances depicted the political and economic realities in villages, towns and in the country as a whole. I was able to listen to some of the comments. Some of the responses of the audiences were captured by the video camera which I used in filming the plays. On certain occasions, an audience remained in the auditorium and discussed the issues raised in a performance. These audiences' responses are fully discussed in the study.

All the performances examined in this study were written or improvised, produced, directed and performed in 1990 and 1991. However, references are made to other performances staged at earlier dates.

Having discussed the role of the geography and the history of Cameroon in the context of the study, I will discuss various terms and concepts used through out this study.

I. iii. DISCUSSIONS OF TERMINOLOGIES AND CONCEPTS.

This section discusses and defines the terms 'identity', 'development', 'theatre' and 'Cultural Action Theatre' in the context of the study. Each term is defined under a separate subheading.

I. iii. (a). Identity.

The term 'identity' is subject to many interpretations as a result of multiple approaches. Wittgenstein suggests that identity simply means that the people of a particular group have something in common with each other which distinguishes them from the members of other communities. (Wittgenstein cited in Cohen 1985: 12). These particular groups might include, women, ethnic groups, the rich and the poor. According to Nash, an identity is fashioned by name and symbol (Nash 1989: 15). These symbols might include rituals in the case of an ethnic group, or flags and national anthems in the case of a nation. Smith holds the view that culture helps to bind members of a group together and to separate them from outsiders. He adds that the most common shared and distinctive traits of culture are those of language and religion; but customs, institutions, laws, folklore, architecture, dress, food, music and the arts, even colour and physique may augment the differences or take their place (Smith 1989: 26). Barth believes that ethnic groups are primarily defined by social boundaries (Barth 1969: 15).

The groups of local professional and amateur performing artists whose performances I watched, filmed and examined during my fieldwork view the term 'identity' from different perspectives. The Bima local performing artists believe that geographical boundaries separate one group from another, and these geographical separations are primarily instrumental in creating the identities of particular groups. This belief somewhat coincides with Mazzini's concept of a nation as Mazzini believes that nations are divinely sanctioned and defined by the use of natural boundaries, but

that obdurate institutions distorted God's created nations (Mazzini cited in Beales 1966: 143 - 154).

To return to the Bima, in their opinion, their life-style, economic potential (which includes human and natural resources), political influence and culture are sub-identities that culminate to reinforce the Bima ethnic identity. They also believe that the Bima form a weak political group which is exploited by its stronger political neighbours (Ngolos, Batangas and so on) and by the larger political groups, such as the government and WWF. This study investigates how the Bima local performing artists tackle this issue of their identity in theatre. Similarly, the Ngolo local performing artists also acknowledge the role of geographical boundary, their life-style, economic potential, political influence and their culture in creating their ethnic identity. They expressed their identity in theatrical performances.

Local performing artists in Mundemba share a similar view to those in the Bima region. However, they are more concerned with political identity. They believe that the inhabitants of Mundemba constitute a weak political group. Thus, although Mundemba is endowed with rich natural resources, the more powerful political groups, in this case the government and WWF, exploit the resources in Mundemba Sub-Division. This study investigates how performing artists in Mundemba Sub-Division tackle this issue in theatre.

Like some of the theatre troupes in Mundemba, the Anglophone performing artists believe that a geographical boundary distinguishes one group from another. They hold the view that the Anglophone region is endowed with natural resources which are exploited by the Francophones. The Anglophone theatre practitioners also perceive identity from a political perspective. They believe that the Anglophone community is politically weaker than the Francophone community. Due to the above factors, the Anglophone community is the disadvantaged group in the national community.

Anglophone performing artists also view identity from another perspective. They, like Anderson, believe that a language is instrumental in uniting people as well as creating the identity of a group. Anderson wrote that the rise of territorial languages and the subsequent deviation from Latin (the sacred language of the Christian religion) debilitated the core of Christianity and created national sentiments (Anderson 1990).

The Anglophone performing artists also believe that the style of dressing which the English-speaking Cameroonians inherited from the British has united the Anglophone community. The Anglophone performing artists hold a view which was first expressed by Douglas who wrote that the Scottish National kilt has become the emblem of Scotsmen in whatever part of world they happen to be placed (Douglas 1914: 31). The kilt distinguishes Scotsmen from other people and reinforces the Scottish identity. Douglas believes that a particular style of dressing unites people. The Anglophone performing artists also hold the opinion that the Anglophone's view about the world - a view which is very practical - has united the English-speaking Cameroonians. Theatrical performances which examine how Anglophone national performing artists use theatre to fortify the Anglophone identity are discussed in chapters one, two and five.

In spite of the views of the Anglophone performing artists, they nonetheless still believe that the Anglophone and Francophone communities make up a nation-state - not just a nation, but a weak political state which is exploited by developed countries. This study examines how Anglophone and Francophone national theatre practitioners give expression to their identity as members of a single nation-state.

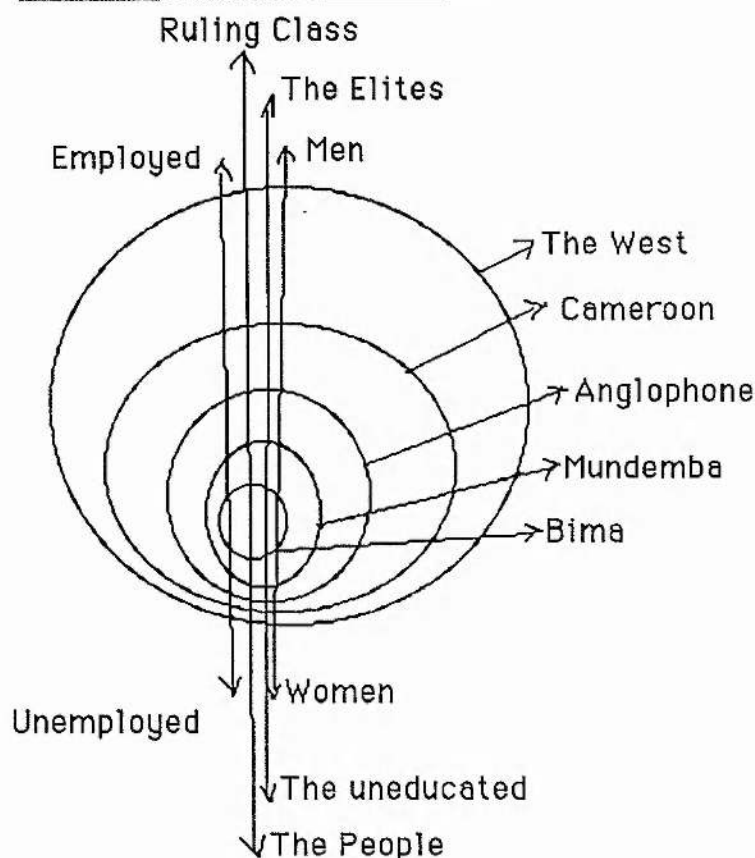
As is obvious, there are different groups with distinct identities in Cameroon, such as Anglophone or Francophone, ethnic identities and so on. Other identities are also present, such as women, students, the poor, the rich, and the unemployed and the elites. Renan indicates the different distinct groups in a large community:

Consider a fairly stable, but complex large and well stratified traditional society. At its base, there is a large number of rural, servile, inward-turned food-producing communities, tied to the land, and obliged to surrender their surplus produce. Above them, a self-insulated ruling elite of warriors/administration controls the means of coercion and the channels of communication, and is legally entitled to act as a cohesive body (a right denied to the peasant category). This enables it to maintain its domination. Alongside it, there is a parallel hierarchy (Renan cited in Gellner 1987: 13).

In Cameroon there are two major types of identity: geographical and social. The first which includes Anglophones or Francophones, ethnic identities and so on is determined by geographical boundaries. The second, social identity, includes groups

such as women, students, the poor, the rich, and the unemployed and the elites. See diagram for illustration.

Fig 3 Geographical and Social Identities.



The circles indicate geographical identities and the vertical lines show the social identities. In Cameroon these identified groups use theatre as a medium through which they can articulate the respective groups' issues. Turner observed that:

Within societies there are different classes, ethnicities, regions, neighbourhoods, and people of different ages and sexes, and they each produce versions which try painfully to assign meaning to particular crises of their own society. Each performance becomes a record, a means of explanation (Turner 1990: 17).

This study examines how these different groups use theatre as a means through which they can simultaneously project and protect their individual identities as well as the Cameroon identity. The study also shows how in a given performance different groups identify their experiences with certain aspects of the performance.

I. iii. (b). Development.

Like other modern terminologies, the term 'development' is subjected to many interpretations. It is a relative term depending on the context of usage. According to Mountjoy, development has been characterised historically by a replacement of "animate" by "inanimate" energy. For example, in an industrialised country there is great use of energy to power: launderettes, blenders, pressure cookers, tractors and the like. This "inanimate" energy has replaced the muscle - power of a work force and thus productivity in all sections of the economy is high and the population lives well (Mountjoy 1975: 13 - 27). In North South: A Programme for Survival the chairman of the commission maintains that development means improvement in living conditions which is accompanied by economic growth and industrialization. In the commission's opinion development involves a profound transformation of the entire economic and social structure (Brandt 1980: 48). In a similar view, Supple asserts that development is the process to which the poor nations of the twentieth century really aspire. This idea is that countries proceed from a state of relative underdevelopment to one of sustained expansion (Supple 1963: 12).

Ward defines development in terms of per-capita income (Ward 1962: 35-55). Against this view, Mountjoy argues that income per head is not the sole index available (Mountjoy 1975: 13-27). His argument is valid considering the fact that taste, essentials, and priorities differ amongst people of the different parts of the world, and it is difficult to measure living standards in terms of per-capita income. For instance, a Cameroon middle-class spends less money on clothes, transport, accommodation, food, domestic services (cleaning, washing - up, baby-sitting, cooking and many others items and services) than its counterpart in a developed country, but their life-style might be quite similar. Thus income per head depends on the context of location.

Chalosky and Lincoln maintain that development means developing the people's potentials (Chalosky and Lincoln 1986: 230). Considering the fact that a mathematician could develop his potential and a thief could also develop his potential, this definition is ambiguous and incomplete as it could either be positive or negative. Colletta maintains that development is a process of positive socio-economic change in the quantity and

level of human existence which is aimed at raising human dignity and quality of life (Colletta 1980: 9 - 60).

From this brief survey, it can be seen that there is much diversity in the interpretation of the meaning of the term 'development' in the west. A similar spread of views exists in Cameroon, particularly among theatre practitioners. Those whom I studied during fieldwork perceive the term development from different angles.

Village theatre practitioners in Mfou Sub-Division consider the term development to refer to objective thinking. For example, the rulers and the privileged class must endeavour to understand the problems of the people from the people's perspective. City theatre practitioners in Mfou Sub-Division have a different view. According to them, it involves the maximization of human resources. Thus every citizen must be given a chance to maximise his/her potential, such as putting the right people to do the right jobs and minimising unemployment.

Village theatre practitioners in Mundemba Sub-Division take a broader view. They believe that it stands for a combination of objective thinking, the maximisation of human resources as well as the availability of essential tangible goods, such as untarred roads and markets. City theatre practitioners in Mundemba city share similar views with those of village theatre practitioners in Mundemba Sub-Division. However, they go beyond this by regarding development to include the maximisation of natural resources. They add that the revenue from the natural resources in the region must be re-invested in the region. It is worth noting that although village and city Anglophone theatre practitioners in Mundemba Sub-Division consider development to mean engaging in intellectual objectivity, maximisation of human resources and the availability of tangible goods, the levels of development differ according to the present life-styles of their respective communities.

Like village theatre practitioners in Mfou Sub-Division, Francophone national theatre practitioners consider development to denote objective thinking. For example, the leaders of the country must be able to analyse the relationship between Western leaders and African leaders.

Anglophone national theatre practitioners' views coincide with those of village and city theatre practitioners in Mundemba Sub-Division. They have the impression that

development is a combination of positive thinking for public interest, the ability to maximise human and natural resources and the availability of tangible goods, such as essentials in villages, cities and in the nation as a whole, which would in turn improve the life-style of every citizen, lead to human advancement and economic progress ¹². These constitute the threshold of the realisation of a developed nation.

Clearly, Francophone theatre practitioners are more concerned with objective thinking and the maximization of human resources. Hence they produce theatre which calls for the audience to think and to maximise their skills. Anglophone theatre practitioners share their Francophone counterparts' views. But they go beyond this by adding that development entails objective thinking, the maximisation of human and natural resources as well as the availability of tangible goods. Perhaps this explains why they produce plays which demand the audience to achieve tangible results, such as bulldozing a road or looking for a solution to a controversial problem.

As is obvious, theatre practitioners do not view development in terms of industrialization. They think of development in terms of an advancement in the quality of their respective group's present life-style. How these theatre practitioners use theatre to transmit their different views of development to the people and how the people who watch the performances respond is, indeed, one of the concerns of this study.

I. iii. (c). Theatre.

There are some of those notions which are difficult to grasp clearly not because we are not sure what is covered by them, but because we cannot say with certainty what they do not cover, Theatre...forms one such notion (Thomson & Salgado 1987:22).

According to Thomson and Salgado, 'one of the oldest metaphors in western culture is that which likens the world to a stage and human life to a play' (*Ibid*: 22). They are not alone in making this assertion. Ngugi in Decolonising the Mind, states that, 'Theatre is not a building; people make theatre. Their life is the very stuff of drama' (Ngugi 1986: 42). Boal maintains that in real life, we are always performing a play (Boal 1987: 10). These perceptions relate more to social drama, than to theatre as a whole. Thus they are an incomplete definition of the multi-faceted art of theatre.

Kingston, Southern and others take a different view. They define theatre in terms of its artistic aspect and the effects it creates on spectators. In Art and Artist, Kingston asserts that 'theatre is an art in which human beings speak to human beings (Kingston 1989: 238). This definition suggests that the art of theatre consists of people watching theatrical performers in action, and for such an action to have meaning it must take place at a particular place in the presence of an audience. Southern defines theatre by illustration. To him, theatre is like an onion with its accretions. Some of these accretions include the auditorium, the stage, the costume, the performer and the audiences. He maintains that if the audience is taken away there would be no theatre (Southern 1985: 21). Thus like Kingston, Southern thinks theatre is basically the act of people talking to others. In other words, in order for theatre to exist, there must be a performer and the audience.

Southern adds that theatre must create an emotional effect. He says, if you play an instrument, you can embody in the action what ever you want to say. But theatre does not lie in the thing done but rather in something that arises from the manner of doing it. He further adds that Brecht's primary contribution to theatre was not his ideas but the effect which he inspired in his acting group (*ibid*: 22). Southern is primarily concerned with the artistic aspect of theatre and the manner in which it affects the audience. Southern further asserts that the performer should allow the audience to decide on the fate of his creation; be it a song or a story:

If you make...a musical composition-you can embody in it whatever it is you have to say to the public; then you leave [it] to its fate, to be read as may be by the separate individuals that compose the public (*ibid*: 22).

According to him, a piece of theatre provokes many interpretations. In this sense, the messages of performances are similar to the the speeches of politicians which are subject to several interpretations (Paine 1981: 187-201; Wilson 1990: 104-131). Here Southern includes one important aspect of theatre; the audience's response. Southern moves systematically from viewing theatre as performing art, to requesting theatre to affect the audience and proceeding to request the audience to respond to the performance. One thing that he fails to make clear is whether the audience should respond to the theatrical aspect or to the message, or both.

Aristotle was concerned with the suffering of the protagonist, particularly the way the audience identified with the tragic hero (Aristotle cited in Barnes 1987: 83 - 85). Aristotle like Southern was interested with the response of the audience to theatre. However, whilst Aristotle was concerned with the audience's response to the sufferings of the tragic protagonist and his predicament, Southern's view of the response of the audience is equivocal in the sense that he does not say precisely to what the audience should respond. Brecht was more specific in that he was concerned with the responses of the audience to the artistic aspect and the messages of theatre.

Brecht did not just want his audience to respond emotionally to a piece of theatre, he wanted his audience to think. He wrote "We tried a type of theatrical performances that could influence the thinking of all people engaged with it" (Brecht 1986: 118). This was a major contribution to the discipline of theatre. The audience must not just respond to the sufferings of the tragic protagonist as Aristotle suggested, the audience should grasp the messages of the performance and also engage in deep thought. Hence, theatre does not only serve as an arena where people receive messages and entertainment; it is an arena where people think, question, meditate and contemplate.

In Plato's view, theatre has failed to fulfil a utilitarian function. Having concluded that there were three classes - the class of rulers, who must be philosophers and politicians, the class of auxiliaries, and the class of artisans, he called for the dramatists to either attain perfection, or cease being dramatists. Perfection to Plato meant that dramatists should address social, economic, political and cultural issues in their respective communities. Plato concluded that since dramatists have failed to attain perfection, they should be confined to composing hymns to the Gods and praises of famous men, or should be exiled (Plato cited in Diamond 1983: 71 - 89). Following his attitude towards dramatists, performing artists could not feature in Plato's ideal society. Plato's censorious attitude towards dramatists was a means of protecting his class (the ruling class). Whereas Aristotle and his disciples were primarily concerned with the response of the audience to the messages as well as the artistic aspect of theatre, Plato like Brecht, insisted that theatre must fulfil a utilitarian role in the community, such as making people engage in objective thinking.

Centuries later, dramatists attempted to re-define the subject. To them, theatre must be a combination of art and purpose. Hence, neither should be relegated in preference to another. This was a movement from previous views to a new perception of theatre. One of the advocates is Dilthey. He wrote:

Every act is the execution of a purpose, a volition, and since the relationship between act and purpose is regular and intimate, the purpose can be read in the act. The act is done not to express the purpose but to fulfil it (Dilthey, quoted in Turner 1982: 14).

A simple example illustrates his point. A playwright writes a play with the intention of unravelling certain controversial issues in the community. However the script left on its own cannot alone convey the message; the actors have to transmit the message through dramatisation on stage to the audience. When the performers enact the play, the playwright's primary motive for writing the play is fulfilled.

Turner expands on Dilthey's assertion by stressing the relationship between act, purpose and goal (Turner 1982). Another example illustrates Turner's point. Women put on a play with the hope of persuading men to regard women as their equals. If the men understand the message of the play and grant women equal status with men, then the women have achieved their goal. Thus the arts is used for a purpose, the purpose is to achieve a goal.

The foregoing discussion reveals the divergent views about theatre by theatre practitioners. However despite the differences of opinions, the various views are systematically developed towards requesting theatre to fulfil a utilitarian role in the community, and many theatre activists seem to agree that theatre involves action and a utilitarian function. See Illustration:

Fig 4 Integral Parts of Theatre

Performers → Theatrical skill → Intentions and messages →
Audience → Responses → Functions.

The local performing artists whom I interviewed and whose plays I watched during my field work do not define theatre. However, from the content of some of the performances, I deduced that some local performing artists hold the view that theatre must achieve a goal in the society. Others want theatre to be instrumental in helping the

people to get rid of human vices and oppressive regimes. Local performing artists do not define theatre, rather, they have reasons for producing theatre. For example, the modern musician at Toto (a village in Ngolo region) who performed a musical act during the Ngolo annual festival of December 1990, asserted that his intention was to instil into the Ngolos' minds (every offspring of the Ngolo group) the essence of 'oneness' and to persuade the Ngolos to develop the Ngolo region. The Government High School Experimental theatre troupe maintained that the purpose of their performance of 1990 was intended to persuade the government to equip the institution. Bate Besong (an Anglophone national theatre practitioner) maintained that he uses theatre to persuade the government to maximise human and natural resources so that the country can develop and in turn, improve the citizens' life-style. These selected theatre practitioners were primarily concerned with the function of theatre within a community. Hence, for them, theatre must fulfil a role in the community, be it the fulfilment of the aspiration of a class, gender, ethnic group, a region or the nation. In this respect, theatre which fails to play a role in the community loses its importance. To them, the artistic aspect is secondary. It is worth noting that the function is the last stage of a piece of theatre. Thus before requesting theatre to fulfil a function, the performers believe that the initial stages have been met (see fig. 4). These local performing artists put on plays and earnestly want the audience to respond so that the performances could fulfil utilitarian functions. In this study I am concerned with the intentions of the playwrights and producers, the messages of the performances, the audience's response and the functions of the performances.

Before I summarize discussions and definitions of theatre, it is essential to discuss briefly the relationship between theatre and rituals, since both resound in the discussion, particularly in villages' performances. Many local performing artists believe that theatre and rituals have similar functions. 'Ordinary' people believe that rituals consolidate groups' identities, and 'through rituals they can acquire their needs'. The village performing artists have a similar view to Durkheim. He maintained that traditional man revered his society or clan through rituals which were symbols of collective representations. Through rituals, an individual identified herself with the community (Durkheim cited in Bidney 1968: 87 - 92).

Although some theatre practitioners, such as the Ngolos theatre practitioners want theatre and rituals to have similar roles, they strongly believe that there is a major difference between theatre and ritual. They asserted that theatre addressed people and added that theatre was like a kernel fruit which had two layers; the surface and the nut. Some people grasp the surface meaning but others broke the hard shell of the nut-kernel and found the nut, and thus the audience was allowed to interpret a theatrical performance. But they emphasized that a ritual was addressed to the ancestors and to the gods. Thus people were not allowed to interpret the messages of rituals. Interpreting the messages of rituals was a sacrilegious act.

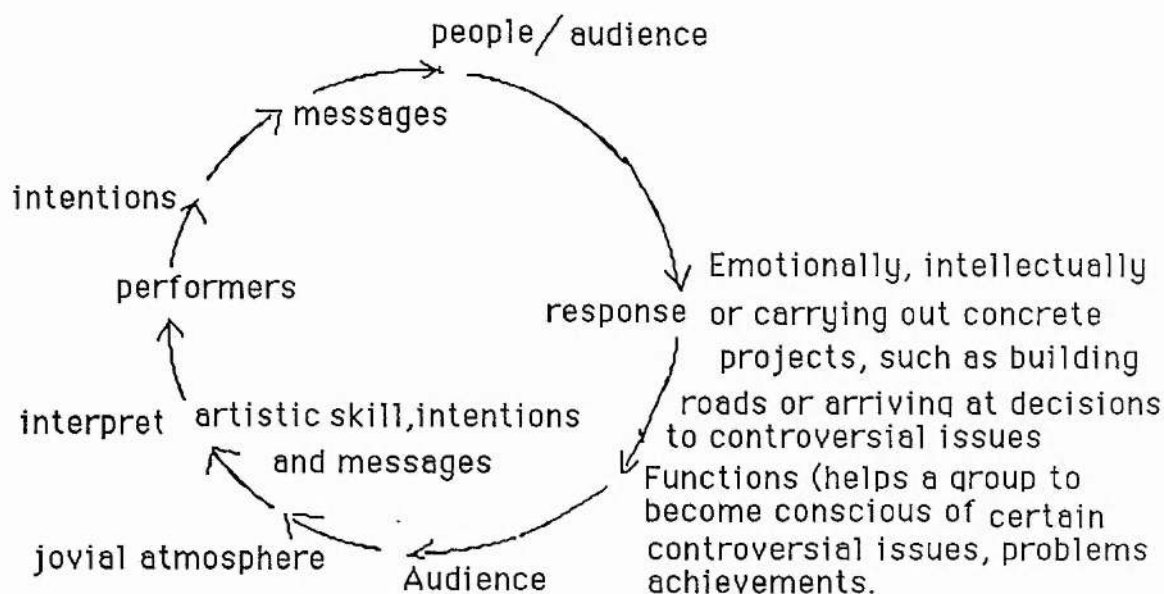
By contrast to the Bimas' and Ngolos' assertions, some anthropologists maintain that rituals should be interpreted. Beattie, in his Ritual and Social Change maintains that comprehending rituals is like understanding a work of art, such as a play (Beattie 1966). Following his line of thought, Lewis in his Day of Shining Red asserts that a Gnau ritual should be interpreted like a play. Thus " we should 'ungate' our vision and search its different special qualities" (Lewis 1980: 31). Whilst the Gnau and other communities interpret their rituals in the same way as they interpret plays, the Bima and Ngolo do not interpret their rituals. The Bima and the Ngolo believe that there is just one message in a ritual, and this message is directed to the ancestors and gods. Viewed from this perspective, it is desecrating for the audience to interpret the messages of rituals. However, the audience could interpret the artistic aspect of a ritual, but not the message.

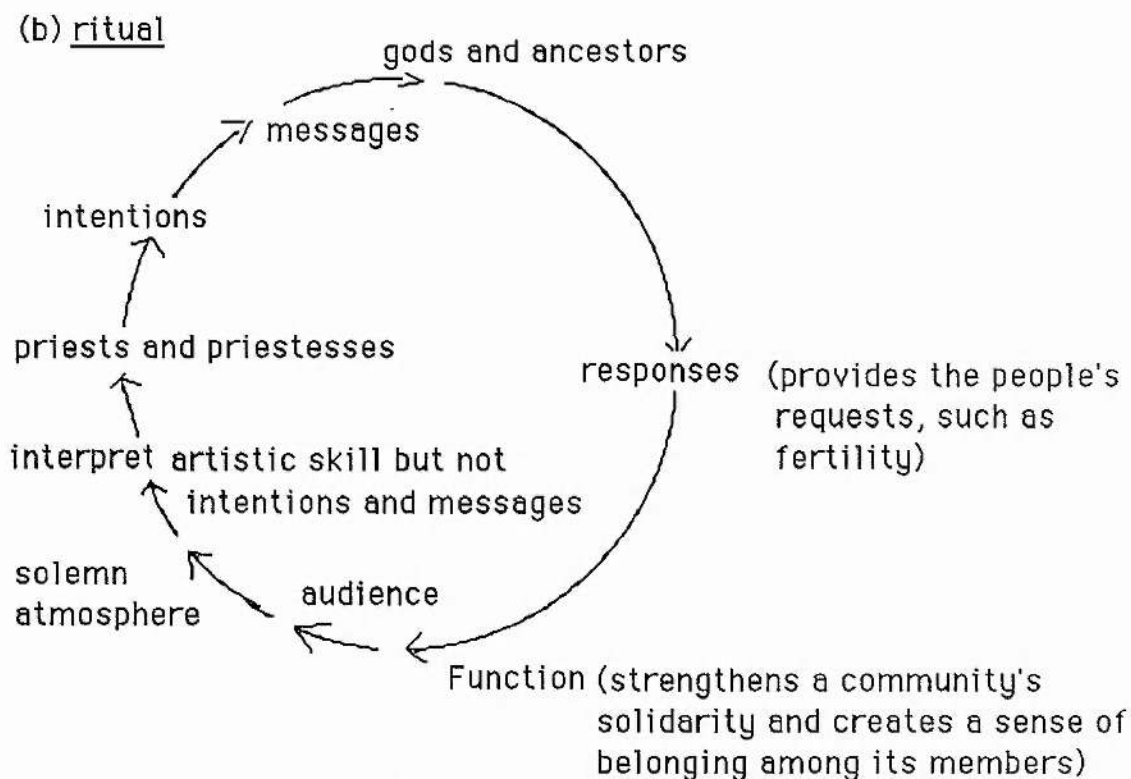
Theatre and rituals differ in terms of their intentions and the messages. What unite both are the integral parts, such as performers, audience, response and function. The performers of a ritual are priests, priestesses and elderly people. In the case of theatre, the performers are actors and actresses. The audience is an integral part of both theatre and ritual, and both theatre and ritual expect a response. In the case of ritual, the gods and ancestors are expected to respond to the messages of ritual, such as increasing fertility and procreation in the land. In the case of theatre, the audience responds emotionally, intellectually or concretely, such as arriving at a decision to a controversial issue or bulldozing a road. Both theatre and rituals fulfil a utilitarian function in the community. In the case of ritual, it provides those things which human beings

themselves cannot provide, such as procreation, fertility, and it protects the people from deadly diseases (such as leprosy, madness). Rituals also provide the people with a sense of psychological satisfaction. For example, when a misfortune occurs, the people turn to the gods whom they think would protect them. In the case of theatre, it satisfies those needs which human beings themselves can provide, such as building markets, arriving at solutions to controversial issues as well as initiating dialogue between people with polarizing views (see diagram for illustration).

Fig 5 Relationship between rituals and theatre

(a) theatre





This study shows how theatre and ritual are identical in certain aspects, but different in others.

I. iii. (d). Cultural Action Theatre.

I have already shown the various views and conceptions of 'identity', 'development' and 'theatre' of selected theatre practitioners in Cameroon. The different troupes whose performances are discussed in this study create theatre for two reasons. Firstly, they intend to make people identify the various groups in the Cameroon community, and in particular, to identify themselves with particular groups. Secondly, local performing artists endeavour to use theatre as a means through which these respective groups can see their problems in a new light and thus try to solve those problems within their reach. Performing artists believe that unless people have identified themselves with particular groups they can not understand their problems, and thus endeavour to enhance the happiness of its members. I have referred to this

form of theatre as Cultural Action Theatre, to borrow Turner's idea (Turner quoted in Schechner and Appel 1990: 1).

Cultural Action Theatre is the theatre that deals with groups' identities, culture, concerns and aspirations. For example, groups, such as women, students, regions and the poor produce theatre that projects their respective identities and articulates their different perceptions of the term development. Because the theatre is produced by the various groups themselves, they use the languages which their respective audiences understand.

For the purpose of clarification, it is essential to define the various groups of performing artists whose works I studied during my fieldwork. In this study, I refer to university lecturers and national troupes who produce theatre which deals with national issues (and which are performed in Yaounde) as national theatre practitioners. Teachers of nursery, primary, secondary and high schools who produce theatre for the benefit of their respective cities are known as city theatre practitioners. Lastly, villagers who produce and perform theatre for the benefit of their respective villages and ethnic groups are referred to as local performing artists.

Having discussed the terminologies as perceived by the theatre practitioners whose performances I watched and filmed during my fieldwork, I will now briefly examine the relationship between Cultural Action Theatre and Theatre for Development. My intention is to show how Cultural Action Theatre differs in many ways from Theatre for Development. However, prior to examining the relationship between Cultural Action Theatre and Theatre for Development, I shall briefly review theories and practices of Theatre for Development.

I. iii. (e). Theories and Practices of Theatre for Development.

This part which reviews theories and practices of theatre for development is divided into three sections. Section 'i' concentrates on theories and practices of theatre for development in developed countries. Section 'ii' focuses on theories and practices of theatre for development in other developing countries, section iii examines theories and practices of theatre for development in some parts of Africa, and section 'iv' deals with theories and practices of theatre for development in Cameroon ¹³.

I. iii. (e). i. Theories and Practices of Theatre for Development. in Developed Countries.

The origin of the idea of using theatre as one of the means through which people might be educated so that they could develop positive thinking, gain an objective approach to social, economic, political, environmental and cultural issues, and attain a good quality of life and human dignity, cannot be incontrovertibly established since this will take us far beyond historical records. However, traditional societies have used audio-visual performances (rituals, theatre dance and so on) as means of inculcating community's norms, ethics and values into the minds of the people. Hence communities created stories, myths, festivals, mime, choreography and so on, which dealt with man's attempt to understand his evolution, creation, life, death, himself, and also to approach, understand and control his environment and the universe. Thus the use of performing art as an educational weapon and as a means through which man can improve on his life-style and his environment is not new. Theatre was a durable asset to local communities since it served the interests of every member.

With the advent of contemporary socio-economic, political and cultural realities, modern people are using theatre as a means through which they can articulate their concerns. This new function for theatre has led the new privileged class to consider that Theatre for Development is grossly rebellious as it calls for justice, equal distribution of

a community's wealth, and above all, it sides with the people. In spite of the privileged class' desire to destroy theatre for development, positive views about theatre for development have been constantly echoed by committed theatre activists (in this study, 'theatre activists' refers to professionals in the act of theatre, university lecturers, students and development workers who use theatre as a means of educating deprived groups, such as women, young people, villagers, the poor and the uneducated). Some theatre activists have asserted that dramatists who do not use theatre to depict the daily concerns of the people produce theatre that has little value for the community:

Art for its own sake could no longer satisfy...I...now had a clear opinion on how far art was only a means to an end. A political means. A propagandistic means. A pedagogical means...There were in Berlin people...who had introduced these ideas into the realm of the theatre. Karlheinz Martin, Rudolf Leonhard and Hermann Schüller, a former student of theology...was now the organizer of the Proletarian Theatre (Piscator 1980: 17 - 23).

Brecht also called for theatre professionals to side with the people. Under the rubric Popular and Realistic theatre, he maintains that theatre activists should use theatre as a means through which they can unravel the mystery of class stratification. He wrote:

...whenever we speak of our need for popular art, meaning art for the broad masses of the people, for the many oppressed by the few, 'the people proper'...Our conception of 'popular' refers to the people who are not only fully involved in the process of development but are actually taking it over, forcing it, deciding it. We have in mind a people that is making history and altering the world itself. We have in mind a fighting people and also a fighting conception of 'popularity' (Brecht 1986: 108).

Brecht adds that besides producing theatre that deals with the problems of the people, theatre activists should demystify the mystery of theatre and initiate the people into the art. In order to achieve this ambition, theatre activists should return to the people's form of expression - folk media:

'Popular' means intelligible to the broad masses, taking their [the masses] own forms of expression and enriching them/adopting and consolidating their stand-point/representing the most progressive section of the people in such a way that it can take over the leadership: thus [make it] intelligible to other sections too/ linking with tradition and carrying it further/handing on the achievements of the section now leading to the section of the people that is struggling for the lead. We now come to the concept of realism (*ibid*: 108).

Elsewhere he wrote:

A theatre which makes no contact with the public is nonsense. Our theatre is accordingly a nonsense. The reason why theatre has at present no contact with the public is that it has no idea what is wanted of it. It can no longer do what it once could, and if it could do it would no longer wish to. But it stubbornly goes on doing what it no longer can do and what is no longer wanted (Brecht 1986: 7).

Thus Brecht moved systematically from the concept of popular to realistic. According to him, realistic theatre is the theatre that deals with temporary realities. It poses questions such as; how, when, where, what, and for whom? Brecht did not confine his newly invented ideas to theories, he tested them in practical workshops (*ibid*: 143-165).

Another prominent figure who thinks theatre should be placed at the service of the oppressed who should use it as a weapon for change is Boal. Boal was a disciple of Freire. Freire has called for conscious education; a system wherein, intellectual practitioners provide a style of education which enables the unschooled to contribute (in any form) to the community's gross production. According to him, this system of education will help the oppressed - the poor, peasants, proletariats, blacks, women and children - to see things objectively, and thus strive to understand the roots of their problems and embark upon solutions to them. Freire called for intellectual practitioners to avoid explanation, because by explaining, they impose their own ideologies on their pupils (the oppressed). According to him, intellectual educationists should avoid reducing their pupils to passive observers, incapable of reflecting, meditating, criticizing, thinking, objectifying and articulating, because this system of education deters intellectual, spiritual and physical progress. He added that it is the oppressed who suffer dehumanisation, exploitation, injustice, and violence. Thus at every stage of liberating the oppressed, the oppressed must take active roles and thus become very instrumental in the process of their liberation (Freire 1972).

Boal maximised Freire's ideas in creating a new theatre known as Theatre Of The Oppressed. He maintains that people should use theatre not for leisure as with the middle class audiences, but as a medium through which they can transform the society:

Should art educate, inform, organize, influence, incite to action, or should it simply be an object of pleasure? The comic Aristophanes thought that 'the dramatist should not only offer pleasure but should, besides that, be a teacher of morality and a political adviser' (Boal 1979: 122).

Boal called for all revolutionary theatre activists to side with the oppressed and eventually return theatre to its appropriate place - to the people:

I believe that all the truly revolutionary theatrical groups should transfer to the people the means of production so that the people themselves may utilize them. The theatre is a weapon and it is the people who should wield it (Boal 1979: 122).

Boal applied his ideas practically in theatrical workshops. His actors were people who have acquired no formal education in the art of theatre. However, he maintains that "the illiterate people are not people who are unable to express themselves: they are simply people who are unable to express themselves in a particular language" (Boal, 1979: 121). From practical experience Boal became aware of the fact that theatre activists can only assist the oppressed to understand the roots of their problems and cannot incite them to produce rebellious theatre:

So one thing that I will never do again is to do what I did in the past, to come, for instance, to a group of oppressed people like peasants and tell them what to do. I am not a peasant, or to go to a group of women and say to them, well, to get liberty for women, you have to do that...but I am not a woman. Or going to speak against racism and tell the blacks what they have to do to be free...but I am not black...So this I do not want to do any more. I think that sometimes we know what has to be done. Women, blacks, peasants and workers, have to get free of their oppression, that we know. But how, how? Only the oppressed one knows, because it is him who is going to do it and not us. Our function I believe is to help them to free themselves and not to incite them to do things that sometimes they cannot do, or sometimes they do not want to do (Boal 1987: 16).

It is obvious that Brecht and Boal realised that the people should be instrumental in their own development. They advocated that theatre be demystified so that the people can independently use it to disentangle themselves from oppression as well as a means for their own development. As Boal puts it "any revolutionary group that wants to really modify society is not to be like the superman that comes from outside space, and says Woh, do this" (Boal 1987: 16). Boal strongly advocated that theatre activists (particularly university lecturers and theatre arts students) should not impose their conceptions of development, identity and freedom on the people. They should allow the people themselves to produce theatre that deals with their daily concerns. To reiterate my previous assertion is to emphasize a point. Cultural Action Theatre which is the concern of this study is basically the theatre that is produced by the people themselves:

it deals with groups' identities, cultures, concerns and aspirations. Brecht and Boal have numerous disciples, particularly in developing countries.

I. iii. (e). ii. Theories and Practices of Theatre for Development
in other Developing Countries.

The Indian sub-continent is faced with problems which include illiteracy, rural betterment, health and sanitation, modernization and expansion of agriculture, equitable distribution of food and other essential commodities, housing the homeless millions, and the rapid growth in population. The prevailing situation led the Indian government to recruit agents who were charged with the responsibility of educating the unlettered people in rural areas as well as in urban centres, through a system of adult literacy programmes. The approach was to enable the uneducated to engage in national production which in turn would lead to national development. However the people were suspicious of the government agents whom they considered 'outsiders', and this factor frustrated the programmes. As a result, the government had to look for other areas. For example, the roles of indigenous performing artists were re-assessed.

Indigenous performing artists (priests, priestesses, praise-singers, diviners, professional singers and dancers and many others) became instrumental in the national development process. Through performing arts, indigenous theatre activists interpreted the messages of the government, communicated the advantages associated with change and convinced the people without creating suspicion in them (Ranganath in Kidd & Colletta 1980: 245-259).

In Brazil, national literacy organizations, labour unions, fertiliser companies, the church and political parties commissioned public performances as means of promoting their diverse interests (Kidd 1980: 280 - 301). In China, amateur drama groups have resorted to theatre as one of the means of creating consciousness in people and to make them see the importance of modern changes. The troupes use drama as a form of recreation and learning in their respective literacy programmes. The newly produced scripts often serve as literacy texts (*ibid*: 280 - 301). In Jamaica, theatre workers have become popular educators. They organize workshops, and community-

based programmes with women's groups, farmers and so on. The women's theatre group is dominated by illiterate women who produce their own scripts through an improvisation process. They discovered that manifesting one's emotions through one's own words is an important spur for literacy. In Indonesia, Malaya, Mexico and the Philippines, troupes have produced mobile theatre with the aim of enacting themes relating to development issues, such as health, education, and so on (*ibid*: 280 - 301).

I. iii. (c). iii. Theories and Practices of Theatre for Development in Africa.

Turning to Africa, theatre activists believe that Theatre for Development should help people to develop objective thinking and promote human advancement. Ranganath calls it (Theatre for Development) folk entertainment (Ranganath 1980). Etherton calls it 'Theatre and Development' (Etherton, 1982: 314), and Kidd and Byram call it 'popular theatre campaigns' (Kidd and Byram cited in Etherton 1982: 314)). Mudenda asserts that:

There are many reasons why our forefathers chose to use songs, dance, drums and masks to educate their young, to comment on the socio- [economic] and political conditions in their societies and to preserve their historical legends. One of the reasons is that our forefathers realized that one of the most effective methods of education is through audio-visual aids of what was familiar. In other words, our forefathers subscribed to the modern education axiom that if a person only hears, he easily forgets, but if he hears and sees, he remembers. They also realized that by presenting ideas through a variety of media such as songs, dance, mime, poetic recitals, ordinary narrative and masquerades, one is able to capture the imagination of the people. It was the function of our traditional theatre, not merely to entertain, but also to instruct (Mudenda quoted in Kamlongera 1981-2: 207-222).

This assertion coincides with the themes of Kidd and Byram's projects on Theatre for Rural Development and Self-Help in Botswana. The theme of the Botswana Popular Theatre Campaigns was derived from a local popular festival song which encourages rural settlers to become socially, economically and politically conscious, so that they can respond practically (in actions and in intellect) to the accompaniments of modernity and innovations. This was the song:

Build your villages together.
Leave fighting on the land and build homes.

Attend meetings and hear what is happening in your country.
 Men should work and give money to their wives.
 Leave fighting in the Gumba-Gumba.
 Teach your children to respect adults
 (Kidd and Byram quoted in Etherton 1982: 314)).

Furthermore in 1981, the Travelling Theatre of Malawi was invited by the government to entertain the people of Mbalanchanda (a large administrative centre in Malawi). However in the course of entertaining the people, the troupe became aware of salient issues (adult illiteracy, poor health facilities, lack of agricultural knowledge and so on). As a result the troupe together with extension workers produced plays on the basis of these problems. These plays were performed with the intention of making the villagers see their problems in a new light so that they might embark on finding the appropriate solution (Kamlongera 1981-2: 207-222).

Following previous examples, in 1981, the lecturers and students of Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria, produced plays based on such problems (labour exploitation, untarred roads, illiteracy, bribery, prostitution, lack of recreational and medical facilities, alcoholism) in Samaru Village. They presented the plays to the Samaru audience. However the university troupe dropped the project when they realized that their approach was inadequate as it failed to involve villagers. The troupe realised that a better plan would be to create plays collectively with villagers which might enable the villages to understand the issues described in a play. They also realised that villagers passively watched and discussed ready made plays as outsiders (Abah and Etherton 1981-82: 222-234). This argument confirms the methods advocated by Brecht, Boal, and Ngugi, namely that theatre should be returned to the people who should use it to fight against the existing system. Consequently, Abah, who participated and who has been a prominent figure in the Samaru project, reiterated that theatre activists who are concerned with the use of theatre for development should live among the villagers or slum-dwellers (in the case of urban centres) in order to produce plays collectively with the people (*ibid*). His ideas were put into practice when in January 1983, an Experimental Radical Theatre for Development project was launched in four villages (Abwa, Wombu, Ngibo and one other), in Benue State, Nigeria (Abah cited in Harding, 1988).

The experiment was carried out by lecturers, students and villagers. Abah maintains that the purpose of the performance was to place emphasis on the practice of educating people to assume an ascribed role in the society, whether as workers, students, peasants, or women. He adds that the primary motive for the project was not to create (western) drama, but to create one which was based on the personal experiences of the people in context. He adds that the aim was to deepen the understanding of problems in the village from the perspectives of the villagers.

The resource people were divided into four groups, and each group was assigned to a village. The group that was assigned to Abwa Village produced a play based on the issue of forced arranged marriage. The story unfolds with a father insisting that his daughter should get married to someone he has chosen so that he can give his son the bride-price to enable him to start a business. However, the mother who has saved for the girl's tuition fees from her petty trading is against the marriage, and insists on having her daughter educated. Nevertheless, the man exercises his authority and also insists on having all his wife's savings, thus mother and daughter submit to his wishes. However the son's business fails. Furthermore the daughter who was forced into marriage against her wishes divorces her new husband. Thus the father has to return the bride-price. Faced with the predicament, the man regrets forcing his daughter to marry against her wishes.

After the performance the villagers said the issues that the play dealt with were genuine events in their community. Parents accused teachers of being responsible for the girl's fate (because the teachers were the ones who in real life made the girls pregnant). Thus parents and teachers discussed the question of a girl's education deeply, and they unanimously agreed to create a Parents Teachers Association, for the purpose of serving pupils' and students' interests. Consequently, the village headman expressed gratitude for the results of the workshops. The performances in the other villages had similar responses (Harding 1988).

Moreover in Sierra Leone, Development Researchers are using indigenous performances as a medium through which they can articulate the controversies that deter development. In Bolivia and Botswana, native movements and women's weaving co-operatives have respectively produced drama which serve as a form of popular

expression, self-education and as a means of building and consolidating their respective organizations. In Zambia, theatre workers and educators collectively create theatre that deals with community development (Epskamp 1989: 105 - 118; African Council of Communication Education (ACCE) & University Research and Development Services (URDS), 1988; Aspiazu 1980: 82 - 111 and Johnny and Richards 1980: 332 - 370).

Whereas other troupes, groups and communities were primarily concerned with using theatre as a means of encouraging development in their respective countries, in Kenya and South Africa, for example, theatre was used as one of the means of articulating international socio-economic and political issues that have created problems in their individual countries. Ngugi maintains that:

Good theatre [is] that which was on the side of the people, that which, without masking mistakes and weaknesses, gives people courage and urges them to higher resolves in their struggle for total liberation (Ngugi 1986: 43).

He added that the Kamiriithu Community Education and Cultural Centre's performance "was part of education as a process of demystifying knowledge and hence reality" (*ibid*: 1986: 57). The community performance in Kamiriithu (Kenya) was aimed at directing criticisms at international exploitation, and also to make the oppressed people aware of the roots of their problems (Ngugi and Ngugi 1982). Also Fugard maintains that:

Any thing that will get people to think and feel for themselves, that will stop them delegating these functions to the politicians is important to our survival. Theatre has a role to play in this (Fugard 1989: xviii-xiv).

Thus in South Africa, Black workers at Sarmcol factory produced a play, The Long March, in March 1987. The purpose of the play was to draw global attention to the evils of racism which have created overwhelming social, economic and political problems in South Africa.

In 1983, a troupe made up of international theatre activists from developing countries launched a workshop on theatre for development in Zimbabwe (Eyoh 1986). This was a significant event which created a new phase in African theatre. It did not emerge as an accident, but as a positive response to the numerous problems in Africa (these include illiteracy, poor medical, educational, recreational, and environmental facilities, untarred roads, and the problems of poverty as a result of joint exploitation by African politicians, businessmen and their counterparts abroad). The project was the

first to assemble international theatre activists. It was unanimously agreed that similar projects would follow in other African countries. This ambition was realized when in 1984 a similar project was launched in Cameroon.

I. iii. (e). iv. Theories and Practices of Theatre for Development
in Cameroon.

After the workshop on Theatre for Rural Development in Zimbabwe, it was unanimously agreed that a follow-up workshop should be launched in a French-speaking country in Central or West Africa. Cameroon's geographical position made it the best possible location. Thus in December 1984, another international workshop on Theatre for Integrated Rural Development was launched in Kumba, South-West Province, Cameroon. Eyoh, the coordinator of the project, summarizes the motives of the project in the following lines:

...to initiate theatre people, development agents and village communities in the practice of theatre for conscientization and mobilization...to contribute to the search for new methodologies in the practice of theatre for integrated rural development; to hold a practical experience in village-based theatre involving villagers in analysing data and in the drama making-process; to assess the effectiveness of the methodology, both in its immediate feasibility and on its long term impact...to demonstrate the process with the view of enabling the Cameroon authorities to evaluate its potential as a means of development (Eyoh 1986: 17).

The project in Cameroon was realised in five villages, namely Kake, Kurume, Konye, Ngolo-Bolo and Ndoi. The theatre activists who participated in the Zimbabwe project learnt from the mistakes of the Zimbabwe's workshop. One of the mistakes was their failure to integrate with the villagers. Thus in Cameroon, resource persons mingled with the villagers and participated in their daily chores. This enabled the resource persons to understand native folk media and thus collectively with villagers produce theatre that was accessible to the educated as well as to the uneducated. The group's attitude towards villagers helped to dismiss fear, suspicion, and indifference among villagers, and motivated villagers' participation.

On the whole the project was a success compared with the project in Zimbabwe. Eyoh sums up the success of the project:

Hammocks to Bridges...The title of this report is in no way misleading. But it must perhaps be explained right from the start that the theatre did not build bridges to replace hammocks, not even in its fantasy world. Rather, the theatre was used as a conscientization process that resulted in the mobilization of local communities towards the realization of the need to, and the launching of contributions towards the construction of a bridge to replace a hammock. This was just an example of the impact achieved by the Kumba Workshop on Theatre for Integrated Rural Development (*ibid*: 11).

Besides this project, theatre for development has been initiated by other interest groups. For example, the army personnel in Cameroon earned low wages, in fact the army profession was one of the lowest paid jobs in the country. But in the 1980s, some of the soldiers became aware of the power of theatre. They realized that through the use of theatre they could rally some army officers in the military service and create a dance-theatre on the basis of their problems. This was to enable them to reflect collectively and discuss their predicament, and express their feelings. Through the performance, there was the chance of making known their grievances to the nation.

They produced a performance in which all the actors were made up to be grotesque. They dressed in monstrous uniforms to achieve the effect of grotesque exaggeration demanded by the play if it were to succeed. Some actors, for example, had stomachs as huge as pregnant mothers, others were as lean as patients who had undergone a series of major operations in the space of a week. Their appearances were shocking. They mimed the parts of people receiving low salaries, for instance, or nagging wives who always wanted more money irrespective of their husbands' financial problems. Also portrayed were soldiers who resort to drunkenness, and how in spite of their problems, they have refrained from receiving bribes in order to uphold national morality. The song which accompanied the performance also expressed their plight, and became very popular as it appealed to the entire nation. It used several languages such as French, English, Pidgin, Ewondo and other languages for the purpose of portraying a national image.

The performance was very popular and even became a television programme. The response from all the sectors of the public was overwhelming. The performance illuminated the problems army officers encounter and helped in inducing the

government to increase army officers' salary. And today, army officers in Cameroon earn more reasonable salaries.

In other African countries, such as Nigeria, the army has shown its discontentment with the government by creating a coup d'etat. In Cameroon, the army personnel used theatre as a means through which they could reveal their plight to the nation, and the nation examined their problem by increasing armies' salaries. The foregoing discussion proves that theatre can be used as a means of achieving an aim by people who have not acquired formal education in the art of theatre.

Women have also taken an active part in creating theatre for development. Their views of theatre in some respects coincide with those of Freire, Brecht, Ngugi, Boal and many others who have called for the oppressed to initiate changes in their respective social formations because they are the victims of subjugation, dehumanisation, violence and so on. Some of the women see their new task as being to:

...'unmask the naturalized ideology of the dominant culture most theatre and performance presents'...Materialist feminism explores the art of representation not as simple mimetic reflection of social structures, but as the creation and maintenance of these structures (Piper 1990: 95 - 98).

Women of Marumba Village discovered the importance of western education, so that their children could acquire new knowledge. However, the village lacked educational facilities, even a primary school. In spite of women's plea that men should build a primary school, the men refused to yield. Consequently, in order to persuade men to build the school, the women improvised a choreographic performance which dealt with the disadvantages of illiteracy. Men responded by launching a collection for funds to build a school and also engaged in community labour for the purpose of building the school. The school was a communal asset until the government took over the management in the late 1970s.

Moreover in June 1985, the women of Nso (a city in the North West Province) produced a play which tackled women's issues. The purpose of the play, besides entertainment, was a direct request to men to review their prevailing assumption that women were beings created to serve the interests of others rather than theirs¹⁴.

The core of these performances lies in the struggle of women to induce men to acknowledge their right of equality; to emancipate women by integrating them into the public domain, and above all to acknowledge the economic function of domestic activities, child rearing and so on ¹⁵. It should be made clear that some Cameroon women not only produce Theatre for Development, but that they also produce Cultural Action Theatre. These performances are discussed in chapters one and two.

As is evident in the discussion, troupes, groups and communities produce theatre which requests the audiences to engage critically with the performances, to develop questioning habits and the logic of solving controversial social, economic and political issues in their respective communities.

Having reviewed the theories and practices of Theatre for Development, I shall briefly examine the differences and similarities between the two forms of theatre (Theatre for Development and Cultural Action Theatre). As earlier indicated, my intention is to show how Theatre for Development and Cultural Action Theatre are similar in certain aspects but differ in others.

I. iii. (f). Comparison Between Theatre for Development and Cultural Action Theatre.

The foregoing review reveals that Theatre for Development is dominated by outsiders, namely theatre activists (such as university lecturers, students of theatre arts) who do not belong to a particular group but who use theatre as a means through which they can educate the disadvantaged groups, such as villagers, the un-educated and the poor. By contrast, Cultural Action Theatre is created by members of a given group. For example, the Bimas produce theatre for the Bima, social groups in Mundemba produce theatre for the inhabitants of Mundemba, and national troupes produce theatre for Cameroonians.

Because Cultural Action Theatre is produced by members of the respective groups, the producers understand the socio-economic, political and cultural issues, and the concerns of their individual groups. They produce theatre that deals with these issues and employ local theatrical skills in order to make their messages clear. Turner

observed that rituals and theatrical performance reflect the culture of a given group. He wrote:

Cultures are most fully expressed in, and made conscious of themselves in their ritual and theatrical performances. ...A performance is a dialectic of 'flow' that is, spontaneous movement in which action and awareness are one, and 'reflexivity', in which central meanings, values and goals of a culture are seen 'in action', as they shape and explain behaviour. A performance is declarative of our shared humanity, yet it utters the uniqueness of particular cultures. We will know one another better by entering one another's performances and learning their grammars and vocabularies (Turner quoted in Schechner and Appel 1990: 1).

As a result of the fact that local performing artists deal with the concerns of members of the group, it is perhaps easier for their audience to identify positively with the issues dealt with in such performances. By contrast, the creators of Theatre for Development are mostly outsiders who do not necessarily understand the depth of their audiences' problems or the ways in which the audience relates to the concerns which are presented to them. Even if they do, local people still often regard theatre activists as intruders, and on many occasions do not respond positively. Renowned activists of theatre for development, such as Eyoh, Abah and Mlama, who have realised positive results have also described negative responses from the audience (Eyoh 1986; Mlama, 1991 and Abah cited in Harding 1988).

Furthermore, the government uses theatre activists as intermediaries through whom they can convey messages to the people (Kamlongera 1981). Thus at times plays are unsuccessful at evoking change because their messages are seen to come from above, from the state authorities, and as impositions upon the people. In the case of Cultural Action Theatre, people instead use theatre to send their own messages to the government (thus instead of messages coming from above to the people, the messages come from below to the government).

That a form of theatre is produced that embodies local notions of identity and development, rather than theatre activists' notions, is significant. It not only gives analysts access to local conceptions, but it also means that due to the involvement of members of the group and the low costs of their productions, this form of theatre has continuity. For example, in my previous study, (Tanyi-Tang 1989: 57 - 108), I showed how the people of Marumba village have continued to produce theatre for decades. By

contrast, theatre for development which is dominated by outsiders involves cost and is ephemeral. For instance, the project Theatre for Integrated Rural Development (in selected villages in the South West Province) which was sponsored by an international organization and organised by renowned theatre activists such as Eyoh, was short-lived. One would have expected that similar projects would be launched in other developing countries, but this has not happened. Not surprisingly, the villagers did not pick up the idea from where the outsiders left. The departure of the troupe from the villages meant the death of this form of theatre for development in these villages.

Also, there is one major difference between Cultural Action Theatre and Theatre for Development. The former divides the audience into interest groups, such as women, the poor, the rich, the ruling class and so on. These various groups identify themselves with certain aspects of a given performance. Each interprets and gives meanings to those aspects of the performance which describe the group's experiences. Thus while the playwright has an intention of producing a play, the producer might also give his own meaning to the play, the performers might attach their own meanings to the performance and lastly, members of the audience who think they belong to a certain group may give their own meanings. Thus in a given performance, there are several meanings. In this case, it is not layers of meanings, such as the different layers of an onion which could be considered consensus meanings, but different unique meanings (such as vegetables, yams, plantains and so on). Thus one finds several meanings in a given performance. These various meanings are not merely 'surface' and 'deeper' meanings; performances are multivocal and purposefully speak to different sectors of the audience in different ways. This allows each sector of the audience to find a unique interpretation to an aspect of a performance that concerns the particular group. Hence the interpretations are unique, just as plantains are different from yams.

Theatre for Development, on the one hand, relies more on purposeful surface and underlying meanings, whilst Cultural Action Theatre could be said to go beyond the surface and underlying meanings by providing several unique meanings. This characterisation of the meanings in both types of theatre is not definitive since each form of interpretation is possible in both theatre forms. This study shows, however, how different groups in a theatre hall respond variously to Cultural Action Theatre.

Another major difference between Theatre for Development and Cultural Action Theatre lies in the fact that in the case of the former, the audience and the producers expect the performance to produce a positive tangible response, such as motivating the audience to solve a problem or to carry out a development project, for instance, build a school. If the audience fails to respond as expected, the performance is considered a failure. The producers of Cultural Action Theatre also expect positive results, but if the audience does not respond as expected, the producers investigate the reasons for the failure. As stated above, in the case of Cultural Action Theatre, the audience is divided into groups who give meanings and also interpret those aspects of the performance which concern them. These different meanings make the performance successful even though people do not carry out a concrete development project. It gives the different groups that make up the audience a sense of belonging to a certain group and the ability to realise how the group is exploited by other groups and how it can improve the life-style of its members.

The central issue of this thesis revolves around the interpretation of those meanings. The meanings attached to a particular performance involves (a) the intentions of the playwright, (b) the manner in which ideas are portrayed by a particular group of actors and actresses, (c) the ways in which specific audiences and other groups which make up an audience interpret the actions they witness in a given performance, and (d) the functions of the performances in their respective communities.

Female city theatre practitioners (not exclusively) produce school plays as a means of conveying their views to their respective communities. Thus although the plays are performed by children and youths between the ages of three and twenty, the audience is able to understand that the messages of the plays are formulated by the adults and the children are merely used to communicate these messages.

These different groups - women, students, untitled men - use theatre as a means of articulating their respective problems. In other communities different strategies are used, women - the voiceless and inarticulate sex, to borrow Ardener's words - use other devices. These include rituals, states of ecstasy and possession cults as the means through which they can articulate their problems (Ardener 1972: 139 - 159, see also Lewis 1975: 32). Also, comparative literature suggests that there are other strategies by

which sensitive issues can be highlighted. An individual under the pretext of drunkenness, for instance, can articulate complex subtle issues in his society, and his actions are tolerated by his community (Karp 1980: 83 - 120 and Dennis 1975: 857 - 893). Furthermore, in other societies gossip is used to encourage moral uprightness and to strengthen a community's identity. (Gluckman 1963 and Paine 1967). Gossip, drunkenness, ecstasy are means through which different groups of oppressed people make their views known to the community. This study shows how local performing artists, city and national theatre practitioners from different groups, whether they are ethnic, regional, women, the poor, students and so on, use theatre first as a means of strengthening their respective identities; secondly, as a means of encouraging their group to develop.

It is worth noting that Cultural Action Theatre and ritual carry out the same functions (See fig 5). For example, rituals unite a group and strengthen the sense of belonging among its members. Cultural Action Theatre also unites the members of a group and creates a sense of belonging. Furthermore, rituals are produced when a need arises. For example, when there is a poor harvest, the people perform a ritual. A parallel can be drawn here with Cultural Action Theatre: for instance, when a primary school in a village is not equipped, members of the group produce theatre that deals with the problem. Both rituals and Cultural Action Theatre deal with the concerns of the people and are products of these same people.

iii. (g). Methodology.

It is important to provide a brief synopsis of my methodology. However, before I proceed, it is worth drawing attention to the fact that this study is a continuation of my previous study entitled Theatre for Development (Tanyi-Tang 1989). In this study, I am investigating Cultural Action Theatre from an anthropological perspective.

Before I went to Cameroon to carry out my fieldwork, I bought a video camera, a still camera and a tape recorder. When I arrived in Cameroon I applied for a permit from the Ministry of Higher Education to enable me to film theatrical performances in

the South West and Central Provinces of the Republic of Cameroon. Without a permit I would not be allowed to film any theatrical performances. It took several weeks before the Ministry issued a permit, and this permit only allowed me to film performances in the South West Province.

I then went to Mundemba in September 1990. While in Mundemba, I studied, observed, watched, participated in, and filmed the theatrical performances in the city. Some troupes asked me to give them crates of beer and bottles of whisky prior to watching, observing, participating in as well as filming their performances. Others asked for food and drinks before accepting to be interviewed. Such demands could, at times become quite taxing.

While in Mundemba, I accompanied an entourage headed by the the Sub-Divisional Officer which toured the Bima region. The Bimas considered the visit a great occasion, thus they produced different forms of theatre. If I have lived in the region for six months I would not have watched the number of performances which were enacted during this short visit. It was during this visit that I watched, participated in, observed and filmed some of the performances in the Bima region. The Bima theatrical troupes did not ask for money. However, I gave small sums of money to the various troupes. This gesture pleased them and they responded by translating performances in the Oroko language into Pidgin English as well as revealing what they saw as the underlying meanings of the performances. The only difficulty I encountered was that performing entertainment was usually the last on the agenda. Quite often, the performances started at dusk. There was no moon-light and the bush lamps did not produce sufficient light to enable me make good films. Thus, I did not film some of the performances.

Secondly, I also attended Ngolo Cultural Development Association (NGUDA) at Toko. NGUDA is a great occasion for the Ngolos. It assembles the members (elites, workers, Ngolo daughters and men who have settled in other regions) of the clan. NGUDA is an occasion when different forms of theatre are performed. During the festival, I watched, observed, participated in, and filmed some of the performances. These performances depicted the social, economic, political and cultural issues of the clan. On the whole, the occasion gave me an opportunity to watch performances which

I would not have watched even if I had lived in the region for a duration of one year. I left Mundemba on the 31st December 1990.

I arrived in Yaounde on 1st January 1991 and applied for another permit to enable me to film the performances in the Central Province. I knew the Ministry would take several weeks before it issued the permit, so I went to Mfou Sub-Division to begin an investigation. I remained in Mfou for six weeks (from 3rd January to the 15th February). This was the period when the people were preparing for the celebration of the National Youth Day. This day is kept aside by the country to celebrate the Youths' activities and their initiatives, and also encourage them to be responsible national citizens in the future. The National Youth Day provides an opportunity for competition in which traditional dances, ballets, recitation and drama are presented. My permit was not issued before this period, thus I negotiated with the directors and the directresses of some of the performing troupes to film their last rehearsals. Some refused under the pretext that I might sell the cassettes. Thus, because I did not have a permit, I did not film the performances which were formerly presented on the 11th February. I instead took photographs of some of the performances, talked to audiences, performers, producers and playwrights.

I went back to Yaounde on the 15th February and the permit was issued on the 1st March. I was then able to watch, observe and film some of the performances in Yaounde. The lecturers in the Department of English and French informed me about Cameroon theatre Festival Week from the 21st March until 29th March, an occasion which assembled the best theatre troupes in the country. It was during this occasion that I filmed several performances (see Appendix 1) ¹⁶. However, some directors asked me to pay huge sums of money which I did not have; so they insisted that I should erase the cassettes in their presence; if not, they would hand me over to the police. Even Eyoh, who was once a Director of Cultural Affairs (in the Ministry of Information and Culture) could not help. In the end I submitted to their demands. Thus some of the most beautiful performances had to be erased. In addition, some of the productions were performed simultaneously, thus I did not have the opportunity to watch and film all of them. Nevertheless, CRTV filmed some of the performances, so I bought a few

films from the CRTV staff. Also, I listened to the audience's responses during the performances and interviewed playwrights and some members of the audience.

Despite the few difficulties I encountered, I feel fortunate to have attended the Bima entourage and NGUDA, and also to have been in Mfou Sub-Division during the Youth Week and above all, to have been in Cameroon during the Cameroon Theatre Festival Week. The lecturers in the Departments of English and French, such as Eyoh, Butake, Doho and others asserted that I have collected enough information to enable me to write volumes.

My methodology was based on observation, participation, interviews, making films, taking photographs and recording interviews and conversations. Having provided the basic relevant background information for the study, subsequent chapters provide my analysis of the performances. The thesis is divided in two parts. The first part concentrates on village and town performances in the representative Anglophone and Francophone zones. The second part describes and examines national performances by Anglophone and Francophone theatre practitioners.

¹ I have chosen Mundemba Sub-Division because the inhabitants in Mundemba Sub-Division believed that their region was underdeveloped and neglected by the government. They produced theatre basically with the intention of solidifying the identity of groups and encouraging development in their respective regions, and also within the groups. Turning to the people of Mfou Sub-Division, the inhabitants in Mfou Sub-Division believed that their Sub-Division was located in one of the two developed provinces (Centre and Littoral) in the country. My objective is to compare the theatre between the privileged (Mfou Sub-Division) and non-privileged groups

(Mundemba Sub-Division), and to examine the themes, motives and functions of theatre in the two representative zones.

² It is worth noting that although the Germans established schools in the north of Cameroon, the Christian religion was not included in the school curriculum because the Muslims in the north of Cameroon wanted to protect their Islamic religion.

³ The term 'mandate' is used in this sense to refer to the trustee territories which the League of Nations placed under the administration of Britain and France.

⁴ Although the people in this region had educational facilities, some people were not interested in acquiring western education. Thus, there are non-literate and semi-literate people in the division.

⁵ Perhaps this explained why the British administration failed to increase the number of primary schools and to establish higher educational institutions in her mandate. The British administration's attitude was instrumental in that Native Administration schools trained people who could occupy subordinate administrative posts in the government and mission schools were left to proselytize and to convert indigenous people.

⁶ Senghor maintains that since Africans address people of different ethnic groups and Frenchmen, the French language which is understood by many Africans (in the former French territories) should be employed as a means of communication (Senghor quoted in Ngugi: 32). Likewise, Achebe suggests that the imposition of the English language in Nigeria eventually became the medium of communication amongst Nigerian elites from diverse backgrounds (Achebe 1990). The elites also used English and French languages to serve as an effective weapon through which they could express their resentment against the mandating countries' (British and French) harsh practices in Cameroon. Davidson stresses the role of foreign languages in different countries (Davidson 1991). Fonlon described the role of English in Cameroon by arguing that, if English is the language that could be used to attain scientific and technical development in the country, then Cameroonians should employ English language (Fonlon 1978: 18). The use of foreign languages is not however unanimously supported. Ngugi has written what amounted to a conscience manifesto - calling for Africans to express themselves in African languages because each language has dual characteristics - it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture (Ngugi 1986: 4 - 33). Heron also holds this view. He states that there is a great danger (of borrowing European experience) for Africans who borrow foreign languages to express African experiences because every language has its own stock of common images expressing a certain people's way of looking at things (Heron 'Introduction' to Bitek 1984: 1). However, some thinkers counter these arguments. For example, Okara points out that there are American, West Indian, Australian, Canadian, and New Zealand versions of English, each reflecting the respective culture of each country. He then questions why there can be no West African or Nigerian version of English, which Nigerians can use to express Nigerian's ideas, thinking, philosophies in their own way (Okara cited in Ngugi 1986: 4 - 33). Achebe carries this argument forward. He maintains that he believes the English language will be able to carry the weight of his African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit new African surroundings (Achebe cited in Ngugi 1986: 4 - 33). It seems the Cameroon performing artists agree with this last view. They have altered the English and French languages to fit the Cameroonian context and also describe the Cameroonian experience. Thus in a performance, words and phrases, and even sentences from local vernaculars are added for the purpose of describing regional or Cameroonian experience.

⁷ Le Vine maintained that the cultural gap between indigenous Africans and those of Metropolitan France forced many French administrators to become proponents of a policy of anti-assimilation (Le Vine 1964: 89).

⁸ Njangi groups are associations created by the different groups in a community such as age groups and women's groups. There are many types of njangi groups. In this study I will refer to them as contribution njangi group and working njangi group. Contribution njangi group is an association whereby each of the members contributes a specific amount of money on a monthly basis, and the money is given to one of its members. This process continues until every member receives his or her own share.

This type of njangi group takes the form of compulsory savings. A working njangi group is an association created by people and the purpose is for the members to work in the farms of the members. The process continues until the njangi group works in the farms of all the members. In this particular sense, I am referring to a working njangi group.

⁹ Beti asserts that the Banes is the second group in the Centre province that produces large quantities of cocoa (Le Vine 1964: 57)

¹⁰ Quoted from a text by the FAO Information Department, in Courier No 91, May-June 1985: 52 - 64.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² In this study, human advancement refers to man's ability to develop his senses so that he can objectively approach man's activities (socio-economics, politics, religion and many others). This will enable man to acquire a flair in arriving at logical or rational solutions to controversial issues, thus advance his quality of life and also attain human dignity. On the other hand, in this study, economic progress refers to the availability of technology in all forms, such as tractors, and the presence of medical, educational, recreational facilities, efficient means of communication, good housing and the presence of experts in the various sectors of the economy. In this light, human advancement is a prerequisite to economic progress

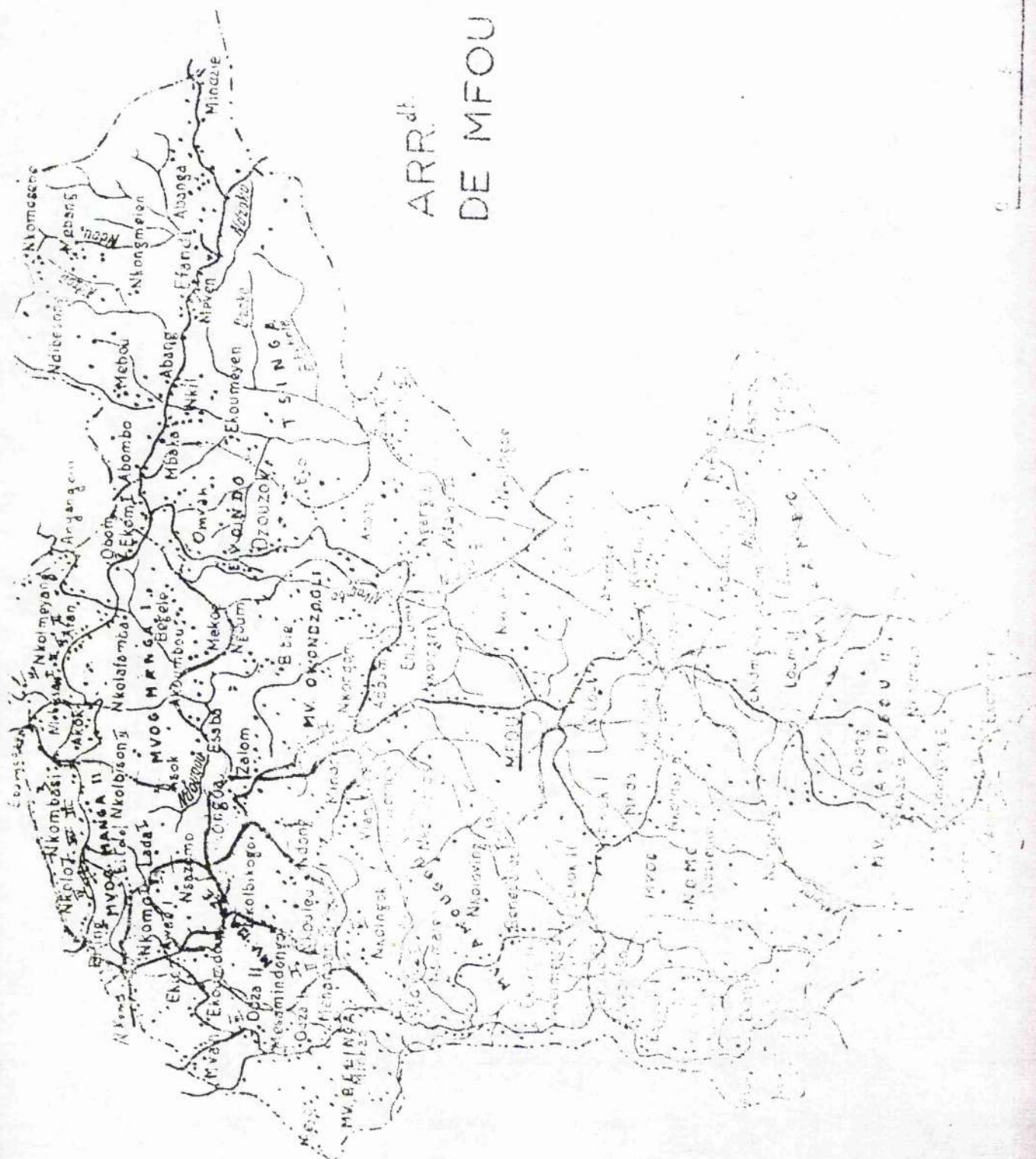
¹³ Some of the material included in this part (theories and practices of theatre for development) come from my previous study (Tanyi-Tang 1989).

¹⁴ These women were using theatre for a similar purpose as the women in Great Britain. Before the 1970s, theatre was virtually the domain of men: men scripted plays, produced, directed, and enacted most of the roles. Thus the image of women in theatre was the portrayal of men's views of them. Furthermore, when women featured as actresses it was to serve men's interests. However, the 1970s witnessed a new phase of theatre; and this deviated from the conventional idea that theatre was the commodity of the upper and middle classes. Women set out to address those issues that impeded their advancement. They realized that they could be instrumental in initiating and transforming the mythical ideology of female subordination. Some women turned to theatre as one of the means through which they could achieve their aim. During the 1970s, Women's Street Theatre sprang up in Britain. All its plays refuted the notion that the hearth and home were the natural habitats of a woman. Women's Street Theatre produced varieties of plays focussing on issues ranging from biological identities to social issues. Sugar and Spice (1971) deals with the oppression and sexual repression in the family. My Mother Says I Never Should (1975) discusses the problem of teenage sexuality. On the social domain, plays such as The Amazing Equal Pay Show (1972) is concerned with the injustice of inequalities of incomes between the different sexes, and the discriminating attitude shown to women at work. In a nutshell, the plays depict the working conditions of women in Britain. A Woman's Work is Never Done shows how a thorough analysis of women has been intentionally evaded. It should be noted that although a few men participated, all the plays were scripted, produced, directed and acted by women (Davies 1987: 175-195).

¹⁵ For more information about the practices of theatre for development, see Haket, Theatre For Development, Centre for the Study in Developing Countries (CESO) Catalogue No 1.

¹⁶ I analysed plays which dealt specifically with the experiences and concerns of Cameroonians and which appealed enormously to the audience. These plays are typed in bold letters in the appendix on pages 407 - 411.

Map number 7. Villages in the Bima and Ngolo regions in Mundemba Sub-Division in the Anglophone zone.

[illegible]

Map number 8. Mfou Sub-Division in the Francophone.

PART ONE

VILLAGE AND CITY PERFORMANCES.

Within societies there are different classes, ethnicities, regions, neighbourhoods, and people of different ages and sexes, and they each produce versions which try painfully to assign meaning to particular crises of their own society. Each performance becomes a record, a means of explanation (Turner 1990: 17).

This part describes and analyses village and city theatre in Mundemba Sub-Division in the Anglophone zone and in Mfou Sub-Division in the Francophone zone. I have chosen the theatre in these regions to represent theatre in the respective Anglophone and Francophone zones. See maps seven and eight for illustration. Most of the performances were improvised and produced by groups, such as women, pupils and students, ethnic groups, civil servants, Christians, indigenous people. The performances deal with a variety of issues, for example, gender issues, class conflict, regional interest, economic interest and so on.

CHAPTER ONE

VILLAGE PERFORMANCES IN THE ANGLOPHONE AND FRANCOPHONE ZONES.

Mudenda maintained that his ancestors produced theatre with the intention of achieving a purpose (Mudenda in Kamlongera 1982-3: 207-222). Village theatre practitioners have not abandoned the role of theatre as perceived by their forefathers. They produce theatre with an intention of achieving a purpose. This chapter describes and analyses village theatrical performances in the Bima and the Ngolo regions in the Anglophone zone and the Megang group performance in the Francophone region. It tries to analyse some of the intentions of the performances and the audience's responses to the performances, as well as the functions of the performances in their respective communities.

I have chosen the village performances of Bima and Ngolo regions for two reasons: firstly, certain ethnic groups, particularly the Bima and Ngolo in Mundemba Sub-Division, believe that their regions are underdeveloped and neglected by the government. The Bimas and Ngolos compete to achieve development in their respective regions. They have formed organisations such as the Bima Cultural Union for Development (BICUL) and the Ngolo Cultural and Development Association (NGUDA) which organise annual festivals. Festivals are venues at which the group's orators, the people, and performing artists strengthen a group's identity as well as depict the group's social, economic and cultural values in speeches, conversations, and theatrical demonstrations. The performances in the Ngolo region were examined, watched and filmed during NGUDA festival which was held at Toko village (the Region's headquarters) in December 1990. Secondly, village theatre practitioners in the Bima and Ngolo regions use theatre as a means through which they can strengthen ethnic identities and also encourage villagers to engage intellectually with specific problems and carry out utilitarian activities, such as bulldozing tracts of land for

roadways and building markets and schools in their respective regions, so as to enhance their life-style. Given the motives of the performances and considering that my primary concern is to investigate how local performing artists use theatre as a medium through which they can fortify their group's identity and also encourage people to embark on development, I considered Bima and Ngolo regions to be fertile areas for investigation. The performances in the Bima region were watched, examined and some were filmed during the tour by the Sub-Divisional Officer of Mundemba through the Bima region in November 1990. The purpose of this tour is discussed below.

Turning to village performances in Mfou Sub-Division, the Banes and Mveles (the groups that make up Mfou Sub-Division), consider themselves to be an integral part of an indivisible unit made up of Betis, Boulou and Ewondos; the indigenous people of the Centre and South Provinces. I hope to show that the Banes and Mveles do not use theatre as one of the means through which they could encourage group identity in the same way as the ethnic groups in Mundemba Sub-Division do. Instead, they produce theatre that aims at stimulating a sense of regional identity within the Centre and South Provinces. Furthermore, the Banes and Mveles believe that their Sub-Division is in one of the three most developed provinces (Centre, South and Littoral) in the country. Thus they are not like the groups in Mundemba Sub-Division who believe that their regions are underdeveloped, and thus engage in theatre as a means through which they can develop their respective regions. In this respect, organizations such as NGUDA do not exist in Mfou Sub-Division. Moreover, during my stay in Mfou Sub-Division, no divisional officer visited the villages. With the absence of such a visit, the possibility of watching many village performances was non-existent.

Given the situation in this Francophone part of the country, I waited for the National Youth Day, on the 11th February 1991. National Youth Day is set aside by the government to celebrate the young people's achievements and to encourage them to aspire to become responsible citizens. Performing arts is one of the entertainments during this occasion, and village troupes contend with city troupes in Mfou city. However, even on this day, the village performances were basically dances and songs, and were primarily aimed at stimulating the people of the Centre and South Provinces to

strengthen their regional identity and also to encourage people to strive for moral uprightness. The songs were performed in the Ewondo language. Amongst the different village performing groups, it was the Megang group performance which most attracted the audience's attention, because of its style and costume. The Megang group was the only performing troupe, which besides requesting the people of the Centre and South Provinces to strengthen their regional identity, depicted problems of the poor, the definitions of their identity and a call to the dominant group to become rational and mete out justice. The group also pointed out some of the deficiencies of government policies. Because of the style and messages of the Megang group, I have chosen the group to represent village performances in the Francophone zone. Given the above factors, there are fewer village performances in Mfou Sub-Division than in Mundemba Sub Division.

The Megang group and performing groups in the Ngolo region used local vernaculars (the Ewondo and the Oroko languages) as the medium of communication, while performing groups in the Bima region used a mixture of Pidgin English, standard English and the Oroko language. All the performances enacted in local vernaculars have been rendered into English. Most of the performances involve mime, song and dance. The chapter is divided into three parts: part one concentrates on village performances in Anglophone Mundemba Sub-Division; part two deals with the village performances in Francophone Mfou Sub-Division and part three is the conclusion.

1. A. VILLAGE PERFORMANCES IN THE BIMA AND NGOLO REGIONS.

This part is divided into two sections; section 'i' describes and analyses village performances in the Bima region while section 'ii' examines village performances in the Ngolo region.

1. A. (i). Village Performances in the Bima Region.

The Cameroon government expects and obliges Divisional Officers to visit the regions under their respective jurisdictions. This practice enables each Divisional

Officer to meet the people under his jurisdiction and to discuss their problems. In this way, a Divisional Officer is able to administer his jurisdiction with less difficulty since he already knows the people's social, economic, political and cultural problems. Furthermore, the government provides an out-station allowance ¹ and financial assistance for such visits. So it was for these reasons that the Sub-Divisional Officer of the Mundemba Sub-Division visited the Bima region which is under his administration. Such visits are considered to be great occasions by villagers, and besides other activities, theatrical performances are staged. These performances depict the social, economic, political and cultural issues of the people. For the purpose of description and analysis, I refer to the Sub-Divisional Officer's visit to the Bima region as the Bima Entourage and I consider three phases of that tour. The first phase describes the performances in Fabe village. The second phase concentrates on the the performances at Esoki Bima Village, and the last phase describes the performances at Makango village. The tour covered the period of 26th - 30th November 1990. There were fifteen members (fourteen men: the Sub-Divisional officer, a commissioner of police, two police officers, commander de gendarmerie, two gendarmes, representatives from the Ministries of Agriculture, Education and Finance, the President of Bima Cultural Union for Development (BICUL), porters and myself).

Theatrical Performances in Fabe Village.

The only access to the Bima villages is by footpath. The region consists of dense forest, brooks, streams and rivers together with hills. This makes walking particularly tiring especially when ascending and descending the hills, as well as crossing rivers. Moreover, there are no bridges and twine ropes are hung over rivers (and streams during the rainy season) to aid travellers while crossing. The ropes prevent pedestrians from losing their balance, falling and perhaps drowning. With rivers overflowing their banks during the rainy season, movement in and out of the region is therefore effectively seasonal, the region is cut off from the rest of the country during the rainy season and access is confined to the dry season.

Having trekked for over twenty kilometres, we arrived Fabe at noon. Food and drink were served, and a meeting which was scheduled for 2 p.m. commenced at 4 p.m.

Before I proceed to examine the performances in Fabe, it is essential to briefly relate the political situation in the village. This will enable us to understand the message of the performances in their portrayal of the village's political instability, poverty and the problems associated with the absence of a primary school and a road in the region.

First, the village was experiencing a period of political turmoil. Unlike every other village where an etana prominently stands at the centre of the village to symbolise unity, political stability, and the moral uprightness and discipline of the people, there was none in Fabe Village. This was an indication that there was a problem in the village. The political instability was a result of the absence of a legitimate chief. The absence of legitimate local chiefs not only causes political instability but also retards the development of the villages. In the case of Fabe, most of the sons of the late chief emigrated in search of wage earning jobs in the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) and Pamol Industry. Thus a grandson of one of the late chief's daughters (who was married to a Hausa from Northern Cameroon) was installed as the regent chief of the village. He carried out his functions efficiently for decades and the villagers together with the government administration recognised and were pleased with his administration.

Nevertheless, the legitimate sons of the late chief retired and returned to the village. Back in the village the sons asked for the return of the post of chieftaincy. This request started a contention about who should rule. The rivalry continued and the villagers were helpless. Initially the villagers urged the acting chief to continue executing his functions while they selected a suitable leader from amongst the contesting late chiefs's recently returned sons. Nonetheless, time passed and none of the sons proved capable of handling the post of village chief. A chief must display the ethics and values that are acceptable in the society. Instead the situation led to violent confrontation. Consequently, the village split into factions as each son sought sympathy from the electors and local population. In the midst of political instability, the acting chief was persuaded by the government administration to continue carrying out

his functions. Over subsequent years, the village became totally fragmented and the regent chief very unpopular, for many villagers now regarded him as a usurper and shunned him.

In consequence, during the Sub-Divisional Officer's visit to the Bima region, villagers refused to contribute money for food and drinks expenses, so that the guests could be entertained. Faced with internal political instability, the regent chief, his five wives and many children met the entire cost of providing refreshment. The villagers also made it absolutely clear that one of the reasons why they refused to purchase their annual tax coupons ² was to frustrate the acting chief. Each group believed that by refusing to purchase tax coupons, the administration would relieve the acting chief of his functions and install a man of the group's choice. It was obvious that the relationship between village and national politics was unavoidable in the Fabe context. The question of leadership in the village partially caused the inhabitants to refuse to pay taxes. Revenue from taxation constitutes a considerable portion of the government's income apart from that which comes from the export of agricultural produce. The political instability in the village reflected the extent to which rural political instability can reduce the nation's income.

Also, the people believed that the members of the government administration were no different from some of the local people, in that their decisions could be easily influenced by gifts from the regent chief. Thus chieftaincy had become a saleable commodity. In a speech made by the President of BICUL during the Bima Entourage, he vigorously condemned disputes over chieftaincy. He asserted that:

It is indeed disheartening that the peace and unity [of the local people] of Mundemba Sub-Division is alarmingly threatened with the many CHIEFTAINCY DISPUTES in some of our leading villages. Chieftaincy which is HEREDITARY and supposed to be regarded as an INSTITUTION is now regarded as a person, hence there are many chieftaincy disputes here and there, a feature which was very uncommon in the past. It is common today to find people especially the educated and wealthy elites vie for chieftaincy, causing confusion among the innocent old king makers and natives who are easily bought over with food, drinks and gifts by the usurpers. This obnoxious attitude of the educated elites is detrimental to our dear unity, peaceful existence, and cultural heritage ³.

Not surprisingly, the villagers' attitude towards the regent chief had negative consequences. Firstly, their refusal to pay taxes affected them as well as the government. They could not travel out of their region as they would eventually be stopped by security officers who would request to see their tax coupons. As a consequence, they had not only incriminated themselves but also become prisoners in their village.

A second factor of discontent was related to schooling. Fabe pupils were perpetually exploited by the natives of Meangwe Two (a neighbouring Ngolo Village in the Bima region) since it contained the only primary school in the vicinity. The villagers of Meangwe Two hired all the pupils (including pupils from Fabe) to transport bags of cocoa and coffee to Mundemba, and they also helped in fetching local building materials which were used in building their houses. The villagers of Fabe village resented the exploitation. Nevertheless, they were helpless since they were fragmented, and could not unite to establish a school for their children, a school which might in succeeding years be taken over by the government.

Faced with the village's internal problems, and coupled with the fact that earlier tours had been futile, especially as previous Sub-Divisional Officers failed to respect the promises made by them, the villagers disregarded the presence of the tour. They were not interested in the visitors and only reluctantly attended the open air meeting at the regent chief's house. Chairs were lined up in a circle and the arena was used to make speeches. The regent chief, the dignitaries, and the visitors occupied one section, the other sections were occupied respectively by the untitled men, women and children. When everyone was seated, the regent chief of Fabe read the welcome address. Below is an extract of the address:

Our major problem is the road. We the indigenous people are financially handicapped. We therefore implore the government to help us. There is no road, our cash and food crops rot in our houses. We do not have money to purchase tax coupons, basic necessities, and to send our children for further education. The cultivation and clearing of the dense forests and luxuriant undergrowth makes farming an arduous task. Moreover, the few bags of cocoa and coffee produced have to be carried on our heads to Mundemba. When a patient is sick we carry him/her on the stretcher. Quite often he dies on our way to Mundemba. Even if we succeed to reach Mundemba, we do not have money to purchase drugs. We do not like the harassment from Korup's staff [forest

conservation group]. We do not have other means of earning incomes. We therefore implore Korup Park to stop harassing us.

This welcome address reveals two issues: in the absence of a roadway, produce could not be transported quickly to a market; the activities of Korup's staff exacerbated the poverty amongst villagers. The chief of Meangwe Two also read a welcome address. He asserted that the reason why his people could not contribute to the entertainment expenses for the present occasion was because the entourage had opted to be hosted by Fabe village instead of his own village (Meangwe Two). This assertion (by the chief of Meangwe Two) led to an argument between the President of BICUL (a Bima) and the Educational Officer (a Ngolo). The President of BICUL furiously pointed out that the Sub-Divisional Officer had previously made a tour of Ngolo region without stopping at any of the Bima villages. The assertion by the chief of Meangwe Two and the argument between the Educational Officer and the President of BICUL conspicuously portrayed the antagonistic relationship between the Bimas and the Ngolos (particularly between Ngolo settlers in the Bima region and the Bimas).

These welcome addresses were followed by an address to the populations of Fabe and Meangwe Two villages by the Sub-Divisional Officer. He maintained that the populations of Meangwe Two and Fabe villages were very dynamic, hospitable, and hardworking. Therefore he had no doubt that they would continue to live up to expectations. He assured the people of his intention to study their problems and convey these matters to the highest authority. He said that the purpose of his tour was not solely to acquaint himself with the indigenous people but also to mobilise and raise the people's potential for self-development, through the achievement of developmental objectives and goals.

Furthermore, he emphasized that the primary purpose of the tour was to meet the indigenous people and discuss how they and the government could collectively construct a road from Mundemba to Fabe village. The roadway would necessitate the construction of a market in the Bima region. He drew the people's attention to the fact that there had been no market in Mundemba city in the mid-1980s. However, when he was transferred to Mundemba as the Sub-Divisional Officer, he persuaded the inhabitants of Mundemba and the government administration to build a market there,

and it was gradually becoming popular. He maintained that initially the market was held between 4 a.m. and 6 a.m. on Wednesdays and Saturdays but presently it begins at 9.a. m. and closes at 12 p.m. He added that the administration had persuaded traders to build permanent stalls and operate off-licences in the market where customers and traders could quench their thirst with bottles of cold beer. These facilities might animate the market and attract traders and purchasers from different parts of the country.

He then added that the people should clear the path where the government intended to construct a road and emphasized that with the people's co-operation, without doubt the economic potential of the Bima people would be raised and that this would embrace other ethnic groups in Mundemba Sub-Division. He implored local people to respect the authorities, from village chiefs to the the President of the Republic. He called on the people to demonstrate the spirit of unity by purchasing Cameroon People Democratic Movement (CPDM) party cards voluntarily, and also cautioned them to be loyal to the CPDM party which was competing with other parties.

He said he had noticed with dismay that the people had not bought their tax coupons. He implored them to do so since those who did not pay were enemies of the great CPDM party and would be dealt with according to the laws of the country. He summed up by reminding the people that those who fail to purchase tax coupons before his departure from the village would be detained in police cells in Mundemba.

Having ended his speech, the agricultural representative also urged the villagers to continue cultivating cash crops irrespective of the government's failure to pay farmers for their produce. He advised farmers against cutting down their cocoa and coffee trees which some had started doing, and stressed that the nation's economic crisis would eventually come to an end. He summed up by reminding farmers of the importance of agriculture, which is the crux of the country's economy. His speech was closely followed by the educational officer's speech who pointed out the advantages of education, and advised villagers to send their children to further education beyond the primary school level, regardless of the cost.

After the speeches, the people dispersed to enable villagers as well as members of the entourage to eat supper. Later the people reassembled to listen to the responses of the villagers.

I eventually realized that the interval was not solely for supper. The underlying motive was to enable villagers to discuss privately the major issues raised in the administrators' speeches. Furthermore, I discovered how tactful the Sub-Divisional Officer had been at the beginning of his speech. Although he understood that most of the people were not interested in his tour, he cleverly ignored their feelings and flattered them by emphasizing the ideas of their generosity and dynamism.

When the villagers and the visitors finally reassembled, the atmosphere was tense. The first item on the agenda was performing entertainment. Participants and observers sat in a circle, divided into various sections, as during the speech making: women and teenage girls, ordinary men and teenage boys, village dignitaries and the visitors. The positioning of seats reflected the hierarchy of the different groups.

Fabe Village Women's Performances.

The first performing entertainments for the visiting administrators were provided by Fabe girls who put on a traditional dance performance. The girls had loin cloths tied on their hips in layers, thus increasing the sizes of their buttocks. The loin cloths flapped behind their buttocks when they shook their hips. They also had cloths tied over their breasts and they had painted their bodies and marked their faces, hands, and legs with white clay. They used Hausa lalle, a type of red paint used for colouring the palms, heels and soles. They wore soft raffia chains on their necks, and hands and legs, and beads on their wrists and ankles.

As the dancers suggestively moved their bodies, they were accompanied by drummers and a chorus. The dancers started very slowly and gracefully, then like lightening, they danced as fast as they could with all their might. As they danced around, their beads jingled in a rhythm that accompanied the sound of the drums. In dancing they would shake their shoulders enabling their breasts to move up and down like undulatory waves. They shook their waists backwards, forwards and sideways. A

spectator would wonder whether the girls' waists contained any bones at all. Since the village is divided into two sections (Besama upper section and Barika lower section) the musicians enacted a song asking each section of the village to send a representative who would demonstrate the dance on its behalf:

Wa foke foko, o ka ilume e ma o ko gve bola.

It is your turn, come up and demonstrate.

Given the political instability in Fabe village, the above song symbolised the division in the village as well as the competition between the two contestants for the post of chieftaincy. The two representatives danced so well that spectators could not decide which of the representative won. At the end of the dance, neither Besama nor Barika won. The fact that spectators could not decide on a winner mirrored the difficulties the villagers face in choosing a legitimate chief in Fabe.

The next performance was staged by a group of elderly women. It was a mime performance. The women dramatised the problems villagers faced in their region. The women mimed the actions of people working in the farms, planting, harvesting, carrying heavy loads and ascending and descending hills, as well as crossing streams and rivers. Some tired travellers would trip and fall into the valleys. The fortunate ones reached their destinations but were poorly received by their hosts. On their way back to the village, they were attacked by thieves. The mime lasted for approximately thirty minutes. Although no songs accompanied the show, only traditional musical instruments were played; the effective exploitation of the local vehicles of artistic expression (the use of dance and music drama, with theatrical devices such as, gestures, movements, facial expressions, and imitating the sounds made by people ascending hills, slipping, and falling), brought the scenes to life. Hence the performance which depicted the people's suffering was understood by the majority of the spectators regardless of whether she/he was an inhabitant of the region, especially because the visitors had experienced difficulty in arriving at the village along the footpath.

When I asked some of the women the purpose of the performance, they gave several reasons, amongst which was this striking response:

Ma pikin you don waka for this road. You see how ee hard for waka. But dis people no sabi. We bee dee tell dem sai, wea man sabi work. But public ee no dey. Even when we carry caca for Mundemba, dat people dey nodi pay. Ma pikin, we dee tell dem sai make dey give wee public. If wee get public, ma pikin, we no go suffer again. Chop weh we fee selam ee dee rotten for wea house

Translation

My daughter you have trekked in this footpath? You realised how difficult it is to trek. But the administration does not understand. We were telling the visitors that our men are hard working. But there is no roadway. Even when we transport cash crops to Mundemba warehouse, the government does not pay for the produce. My daughter, we were telling the government to give us a roadway. If we have a roadway, we would no longer suffer. Our food crops would not rot in our houses.

This woman pointed out that the presence of a roadway in the region would be the apex of development and thus would solve the villagers' problems. A road link in the Bima region would enable the villagers to sell their crops for cash which could then be used to purchase tax coupons and other basic necessities.

Thus one of the messages of the performance was to inform the audience that the Bima people are industrious and hard working. They carry their cash and food crops on their heads to Mundemba. Hence, the Bima farmers are unlike the Ghaba farmers who allow wholesalers from different regions to purchase their food crops. The wholesalers earn 50% profit merely for transporting the food crops from Ghaba region to the nearest market (Burnham, 1980: 282).

After the women's mime, the atmosphere among the visitors was completely relaxed. Encouraged by this change, the girls and women then enacted songs which mocked their men for losing valour in the presence of the visitors. Their men pointed out that there were police officers among the visitors who could have used their guns in silencing the people. Perhaps, they were right because the police officers' duty was to protect the visitors, even if it meant using their guns to frighten the villagers.

The Bima and Ngolo ethnic groups consider entertainment a trivial activity in which only women and children can get involved. Thus any man who engages seriously in the domain is considered effeminate. Only praise-singers are regarded seriously and respected to an extent. Nevertheless, the art of entertainment inadvertently turns out to be a durable asset for women for they exploit it fully for their own

interests. Given the women's position in the society, their views are rarely heard. For example, they are almost regarded as men's property, and are exempted from participating in grand public discussions. They are not allowed to participate in the discussion between government administrators, the local dignitaries and untitled men.

In this respect, the women surreptitiously used the performing arts as one of the means through which they could make their views about the problems they faced in the village known to the participants (particularly the visitors) of the meeting. Thus they effectively communicated a message to their menfolk, and more importantly to the visiting administrators through the medium of theatre. The women fully understood that if their men were arrested and put in cells, they would not only be left with the responsibility of feeding their families, but they would also have to trek long distances in order to feed their imprisoned husbands and kinsmen. To safeguard against the seemingly inevitable calamity, the women instantly improvised a mime show, and this had a tremendous effect on the participants during the second half of the village meeting.

The Fabe women who were prohibited from participating in men's politics used theatre to intervene in men's politics. Ardener and Lewis maintain that in other societies, women use states of ecstasy and possession as means through which they can force men to become aware of women's power (Ardener 1972: 135 - 159; Lewis 1975: 32). However, unlike the women described by Ardener and Lewis, the women of Fabe Village did not use theatre for a such a purpose. Rather, their main intention was to act as mediators between their men and the entourage, and thus avoid a crisis. The women's mime was closely followed by an old man's performance.

The Old Man's Performance.

An old man enacted a performance which involved praise singing. He started by moving slowly, making sure that he had captivated the audience's attention. He asked rhetorical questions such as, where in the land of Bima has chieftaincy become a saleable product ? Having asked the question, he looked the spectators straight in the eyes as though he intended to read the answers. He said the village (referring to the

post of chieftaincy) had been stolen by rich influential men. He used different intonations of voice and other vocal mannerisms to emphasize aspects of his performance. He personified the etana and portrayed it as a mighty disciplinarian, moralist, educator and warrior; he depicted the forest as a reformatory shrine; the streams, rivers, and hills as retributive gods; and he vilified Bima's neighbours as old maids who once lived at the Bima's mercy. But fortune is now reversed, he suggested, now it is the opposite; all the primary schools are located in the settlers' villages. The Bimas are at the mercy of others. He summed up by questioning if the Bima would ever retrieve their past glory. Perhaps he meant, when would the Bimas take their rightful position among other inhabitants in the region and also in the country.

Unlike the Ghaba who believe that they can only participate in Ghaba politics whilst regional and national politics are for other ethnic groups (Burnham, 1980: 281), the Bima local performing artists want the Bima to take an active part in both regional and national politics. The old man's performance was therefore a call for Bimas to strengthen their own identity, and to fortify socio-economic and political unity. This initiative might enable them to take an active part in the country's politics.

The old man was not the first to call on the Bima to unite, to strengthen their identity and develop solidarity. During the Meeting of the Bima chiefs on 3rd November 1990, the President of BICUL noticed with dismay that some chiefs were dozing. Thus, he asked for some members to enliven the atmosphere with traditional songs and dances. A praise-singer instantly composed a song for the benefit of Bima. The song was:

Gvato gva Bima kitanea ni onyolo.	Oh Bima, unite.
Ya moki ingha sunga su.	Oh for the ethnic group's sake.
Nga seka nana e-e	If not, the market will be built in another region.
ba ko longa makiti o mofo moki.	

The song aimed at advising Bima chiefs and politicians of the different villages to unite for the purpose of developing the region. The song maintained that, in the absence of Bima unity, the government would build the intended market in a different region. Having listened to the song, the chiefs and politicians applauded. Although the issue of the market was not listed amongst the issues to be discussed in the meeting, the

chiefs discussed it at length and arrived at a decision. Thus, although the chiefs disagreed about which village the market might eventually be sited in, they were united over the issue of the market being built somewhere in the Bima area. In this respect, besides using theatre to enliven the people as the President of BICUL had requested, the role of music and dance theatre went beyond this by making the chiefs think and arrive at a solution to an important problem which they tactfully ignored for fear of causing more animosity between themselves. Perhaps the President of BICUL planned to raise the issue at the next Meeting of the Bima Chiefs when the chiefs might have resolved some of their problems. However, the praise-singer was able to raise the subject in an entertaining performance without causing animosity. The praise-singer used his performance to articulate a delicate issue in the community. Comparative literature suggests that there are other strategies by which sensitive issues can be highlighted. For instance, both Karp and Dennis report that an individual under the pretext of drunkenness can articulate complex subtle issues in his society, and his actions are tolerated by his community (Karp 1980: 83 - 120 and Dennis 1975: 856 - 863). This performance by the praise-singer showed the power of theatre again prominently in evidence. The performance succeeded as a result of the fact that the Bima chiefs wanted the market to be located in the Bima region and not in a neighbouring region. This implies that a performance which intends to persuade the audience to take an action must depict the advantages that would accompany the action.

The old man employed metaphors to convey his message. For example, he compared the absence of a legitimate chief to the destruction of the village. He said a group without a leader only leads to lawlessness, indiscipline and moral decadence. Such a group is like a fish out of water, there is bound to be anarchy. Furthermore, he used rhetorical questions, intonation, personification and other theatrical devices for the purpose of making his message clear.

Response of the Audience.

After the performances, in Fabe village, the chiefs, elders, and the visitors were served with drinks, such as Kange (local whisky), palm-wine, different types of local

beer, and imported whisky. In general discussion that followed the performances, there was an air of seriousness on the part of the administration and the villagers about the points raised in the performances. This discussion was unlike the discussion generated by the Konye performances (which have been reported in the introductory chapter) in which the performing artists and the locals intentionally and directly discussed the issues raised in the improvised play (Eyoh 1986).

The effects of the performances I witnessed reduced the tension in the administrators and created a friendly and cordial atmosphere among all those assembled. They made possible a discussion between the participants in a relaxed manner, in which each party strove to understand the other's problems.

The administration maintained that if the Bimas listened to the message of the old man's performance, there might be political stability in the village. Thus the government administration could spend time collecting income from the sales of tax coupons rather than being involved in settling disputes. They pointed out that the villagers were unintentionally retarding progress in their region since it was the revenue from taxes that was used to build hospitals and schools, as well as to construct roads. Therefore if the people wanted to enjoy the facilities of the government, they must be prepared to fulfil their own rudimentary obligations to the nation.

On the other hand, the people asserted that they had paid taxes for a couple of decades and yet their region had not changed. They demanded that the government should construct a road before asking for taxes. They maintained that quite often their crops rot in their homes, and that even the few bags of cash crops which women and children transported to Mundemba were not paid for, since the government claimed to be facing economic crisis. Moreover, opportunist private purchasers exploited the situation by paying far below the official prices. They stressed that a road was the central development which would enable them to transport their crops to the nearby markets. Tourists and traders would also be attracted to the region, and might purchase some of their handicrafts. A road would eventually boost the economy of the region, and they would therefore pay their taxes at the appropriate time.

In spite of differences in opinion, the two parties (local people and the administration) reached a compromise. The Sub-Divisional Officer appealed to the

villagers to pay their taxes as this would enable them to visit relatives in other parts of the country without being harassed on the way by security officers who often stopped public transport to ask passengers to show their tax coupons. The Sub-Divisional Officer also assured the people of the government's firm decision to pay for the farmers' produce, and he also called on them to mobilize the community to fell trees along the intended route where the government had promised to construct a road. He claimed that as a result of the hilly nature of the area it was impossible for machines to work in the region. All the while he persistently urged the villagers to unanimously select a leader whom the administration would then recognise.

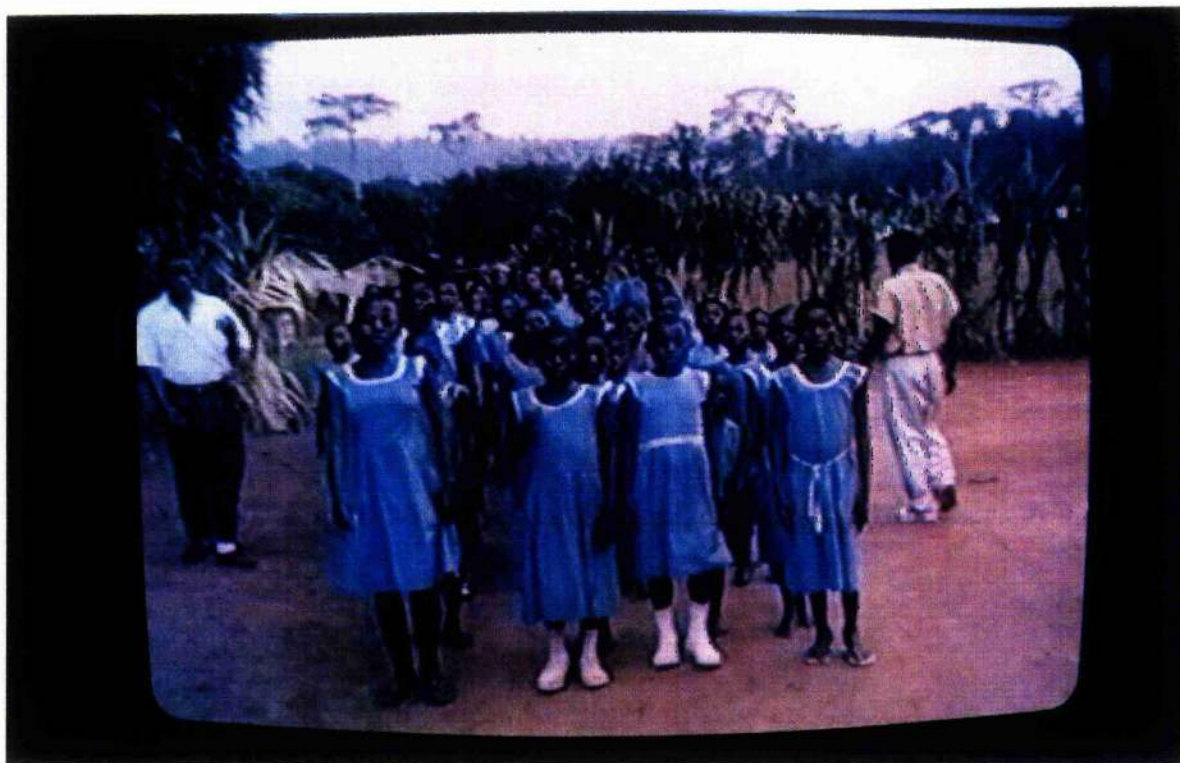
It was apparent that political disunity amongst Fabe villagers made it impossible for them to confront a common enemy, such as the administrators' threats. This situation indirectly forced women and the old man to portray their feelings about the political, economic and social situation, as they did through the mime and other performances. Without the intervention of women and the old man their plight would not have been expressed as forcefully as it was. Indeed, the village representatives in public discussion could never have made such an impact on, nor so powerfully expressed the message to the administrators. Consequently, it was absolutely clear from the administrators' response to the performances that theatre had tremendous effects on its audience. Theatre should therefore be looked at as an arena for practising democracy, for giving voice to women and ordinary men who are characteristically mute in public debate, as well as a means of raising people's consciousness.

Performances at Esoki Bima.

On the second day of the tour, the visitors arrived at Esoki Bima, one of the biggest villages in Bima region. The village is well populated, and there is a government primary school there. The pupils and the staff assisted the villagers in building a temporary hall to entertain their guests. They also cleaned the village, cleared the footpath that leads to the village and fetched water to enable members of the entourage to have showers. Furthermore, unlike the poor reception which the entourage received at Fabe village, there was a hearty welcome at Esoki Bima from the acting



Picture Number 1. Ekwe members led by nyankwe mask welcome the visitors at Esoki-Bima Village.



Picture Number 2. The pupils of Esoki-Bima march to the temporary hall built to entertain the visitors.

chief, who was a brother of the absent incumbent, and from the villagers, members of the ekwe society and nyamgbe, the mask that represents the mgbe cult (see picture number 1). The presence of nyamgbe and etana in the village were both indications of political stability. The reception indicated that when a legitimate chief and the people jointly appoint a regent chief, there was bound to be political stability in the village. This contrasted with the political instability in Fabe Village due to the dispute between the sons of the late chief and the acting chief appointed by the people.

The entourage was later led to the temporary hall where everyone was given a seat according to his or her status. A welcome address was then given by the acting chief. The address contained accounts of the people's sufferings and their demands. The Sub-Divisional Officer, the Educational Officer and the Agriculturist reiterated their usual messages.

In response to the speeches of the government administrators, the villagers maintained that as a consequence of the government refusal to pay for their cash crops, they had started chopping their cocoa and coffee trees. An old man showed the entourage bags of cocoa and coffee which were rotting in his house. They complained bitterly of the problems they faced when they took bush meat to Mundemba, for the Korup's staff (conservation officers) did not take the trouble of enquiring where or how the meat was obtained. People in possession of bush meat were indiscriminately arrested by forest guards and detained in police cells by security officers. Thus the establishment of the Korup National Park had exacerbated their plight, since revenue from hunting constituted one of their major sources of earned income. Another old man claimed that the government had deceived local people several times with vague promises. For instance, they had felled trees and cleared a tract of land for an intended road which was never realised. They would no longer listen therefore to empty promises. He emphasized that if the government wished to construct a road, it should employ machines to clear the forest instead of asking local men to do the work. His peers agreed and added that men were weaker than machines. He summed up by adding that the government was only interested in collecting taxes from the destitute villagers.

Women also complained of how the little money they got from the sales of spices gathered from the forest was not enough to maintain their families. The government should, then, allow their men to hunt, since meat was lighter to convey to Mundemba than bags of cocoa and coffee. Besides it was easier to sell meat than cash crops in the town.

Another cause for complaint was that the government primary school at Esoki Bima suffered from shortages of classrooms and staff. In addition, the government failed to transmit to pupils information regarding the dates of registration for the common entrance examination into government secondary schools. Even when it had done so, the information reached the school too late, and the pupils did not have sufficient time to compile the required dossiers which would have enabled them to register for the entrance examination into government secondary schools. As a result, after completing primary education, female pupils had no other alternative than to get married and have children. Hence in the region, there were young girls of thirteen and fourteen who were already expectant or nursing mothers, whilst some of the boys emigrated to cities and others became hunters and farmers.

It is widely believed that every child in the country should have an equal opportunity to attain western education, irrespective of where the child lives. For instance, a Cameroon writer maintains that:

Le pays accorde ainsi une attention égale aux différents secteurs de économie, aux différentes régions, aux villes, campagnes, aux hommes, aux femmes, aux adultes et aux jeunes. Enfin la justice social vise à redistribuer équitablement les fruits du développement entre différents groups, et donner à chaque citoyen des chances égales dans le cadre de la solidarité nationale (Ngandjeu 1988: 19).

However, although the government had established secondary schools in all the Sub-Divisions for the purpose of enabling the children in every part of the country to have access to secondary and high schools, the people charged with the responsibility of sending information relating to entrance examinations into these schools were effectively depriving the pupils in Esoki Bima from continuing further education beyond primary school level.

Given this background to the problems of education, the village pupils performed a song for the visiting administrators. This song reflected their demands,

whereas the adults' performances (reviewed later) portrayed their indifference towards the government. The song was prepared by the pupils for the occasion and it was a direct plea to the government to equip the school properly and to transmit information about examinations at the appropriate time. It also reminded the government that its continued attempts to boost the nation's educational system in spite of the biting effects of the economic depression, had not helped the few primary schools in the Bima region. The few primary schools in the Bima region suffered from shortages of teachers and classrooms:

We are the pupils of government school in Esoki Bima.
 We are glad to have you in our midst today.
 Welcome, welcome our Sub-Divisional Officer.
 Welcome, welcome to you our dear guests.
 We are happy to have you in our midst today.
 Take our message to our dear government.
 And send improvement to our new school.

See picture number 2. The positive benefits of western education were obvious to the pupils, who wanted to avoid the burden of working on the farms as their parents did. To them, such an education was the only means to escape their parents' life-style and improve their lot. In a nutshell, they were earnestly requesting the government (particularly the civil servants in the Ministry of National Education) to think of peasants' children in the more remote regions who constitute part of the Cameroon population.

The dignitaries of the village also performed a traditional male dance. They wore their traditional costumes, which included an esanga (a large loin cloths) tied around the waist with two overlapping edges by the sides. They wore long-sleeved shirts, scarves around their neck, red caps with feathers attached to them, strings of the teeth of lions and leopards, and held fans made from raffia materials, as well as decorated walking sticks.

They danced, by stooping, then suddenly standing erect. They shook their shoulders, pushed their buttocks backwards, forwards, sideways, and held their carved sticks firmly. Quite often a performer acted as though he owned the entire arena by spreading his legs apart. The performance was a combination of dance, music and mime. The dignitaries clearly had tremendous pride in the performance. This was expressed in their facial expressions, their bodily movements and their reactions to gifts

from the audience. When a member of the entourage gave one of the dancers money, the performer shook his head and pointed to the floor, as an indication that the money should be placed on the floor. It was said that members of this particular dance society should not receive money as this would dishonour them within a group consisting of village dignitaries. Perhaps this particular dance was performed with the intention of informing the entourage that, in spite of the poverty in villages, villagers would not beg from the government or its representatives. Rather, the villagers were asking the government to pay for the cash crops it received and also to allow villagers to carry out hunting expeditions in their forest.

Another group of performers enacted war. The costumes consisted of pants and fresh young branches tied around the waists and on the heads of the men who danced violently, shaking their stomachs and shoulders. They skipped from one direction to another, sometimes moved stealthily like people intending to catch a chicken. Towards the end of the dance, they jumped and skipped from one end of the arena to the other as though they were celebrating a successful battle. At the end of the dance they all collected the leaves which had fallen on the floor, so that after they left, there was no trace of their performance. The leaves would have attracted the enemies' attention, had they remained on the floor. Probably the performance was aimed at portraying men's virility to the administration.

I asked some of the dancers why they used a secret language (a combination of sounds such as 'mmm' and signs) in the performance, thereby making the message of the performance accessible only to the members of the group. There were many responses. The most striking one was that even if the group had used simple words, the administration would never have understood. This response was said loudly in the presence of the visitors. Perhaps the dancers really wanted to tell the administration that it had deliberately refused to understand the problems of the people. My enquiry created an opportunity for the dancers to reveal their feelings to the administration. The administration for its part, ignored the remarks. It should be remembered that the visitors received a poor reception and were drawn into the political problem in Fabe. Thus, they were pleased with the reception and the political stability at Esoki Bima, rather than the people's feelings towards the administration.

The performers portrayed different temperaments and moods in their various songs and dancing techniques. In this way, they channelled their grievances towards the government. Except for the pupils' musical theatre, most of the performances in Esoki Bima portrayed a callous disregard for the government, and indeed they refused to portray the people's frustration in front of the visitors. Perhaps the continuous experience of empty promises from the government had hardened them to develop such an aggressive attitude. The people held the opinion that the government which prescribes the rules of the society had failed to keep its promises, and they no longer believed in government rhetoric or in a political culture that had lost its efficacy.

Although their complaints were almost identical to those advanced by the people of Fabe through actions more than words (apart from the pupils who used a song), the people of Esoki Bima were vocal, united and more recalcitrant. The attitude of the performers of Esoki Bima village indicated the extent to which a united people can portray dignity even in the presence of a superior and powerful opponent. Theatre became the most important tool through which the people could transmit a set of highly charged messages to their superiors.

It has been shown above that the women of Fabe Village used theatre to intercede between their men and the entourage; that the men of Esoki Bima used theatre to portray their indifference and contempt for the entourage. In both cases men and women were in a sub-ordinate position in relation to the entourage, and that theatre was one of the means through which the people could make their views known to the administration.

The Performances in Makango Village.

On the fourth day of the tour, the entourage arrived at the villages of Massaka and Makango. At Makango village descendants of the late chief have been contesting for the post of chieftaincy for a couple of years. This led to a conflict which had split the village into two factions. After the death of a chief, villagers usually democratically elect a successor amongst the late chiefs' sons, and the Sub-Divisional Officer officially installs the chosen son as the legitimate village chief. Without such an official

installation of a late chief's successor, a village faces political turmoil. The villagers here were aware of the fact that the continuous absence of a legitimate chief would eventually create a state of anarchy, which would have been similar to the political situation in Fabe village. Thus they received the entourage whole-heartedly because the Sub-Divisional Officer was to install a legitimate village chief. As expected, a temporary hall had been built for the occasion, and so the entourage and other visitors were led there. Again the different groups sat according to their respective social status and the chief's installation ceremony and performing activities got under way.

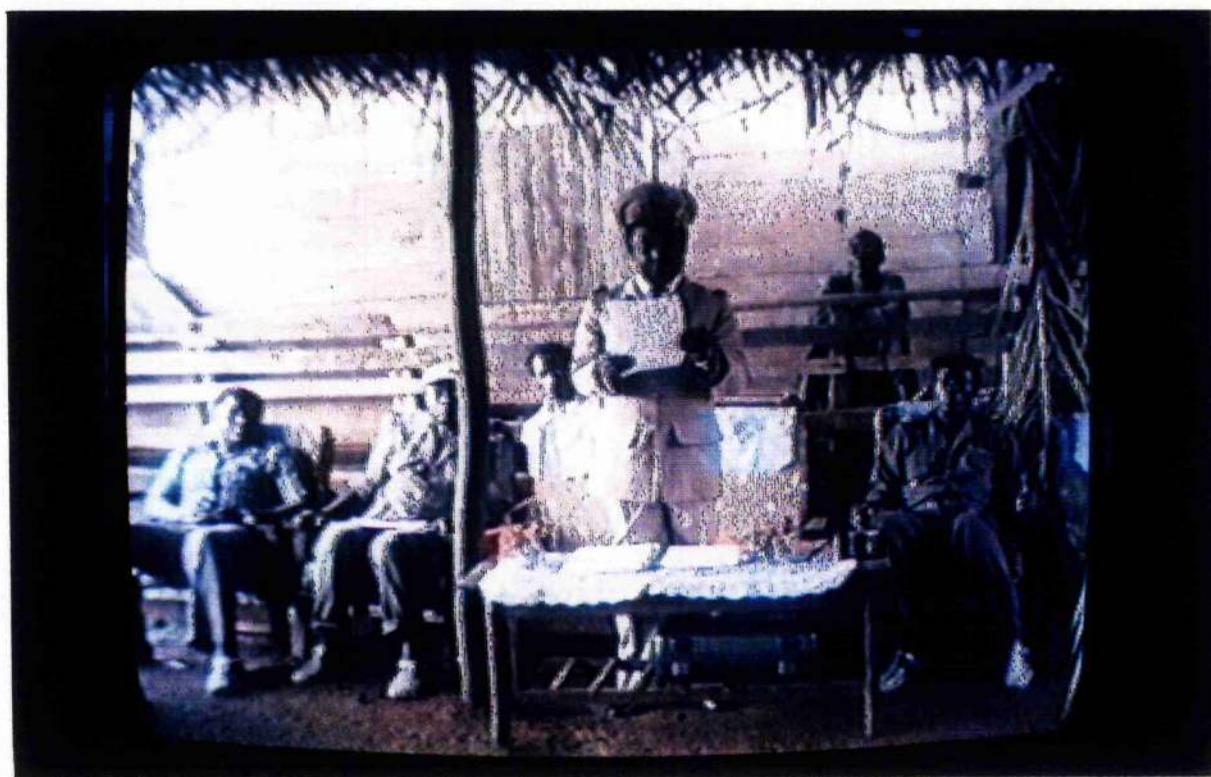
Installation and Indigenous Performances.

The pupils knew about the problem of chieftaincy in Makango village, and were pleased that the Sub-Divisional Officer would resolve the issue by officially installing the chosen son. Their performance reflected this as they melodiously recited one of the songs composed for the occasion:

Oh what a lovely day, what a lovely day, what a lovely day.	(thrice)
Oh what a lovely day.	
Oh what a lovely day, what a lovely day, what a lovely day.	"
Oh what a beautiful day, what a beautiful day, what a beautiful day.	"
Oh what a beautiful day.	
Oh what a beautiful day, what a beautiful day, what a beautiful day.	"
Oh what a happy day, what a happy day, what a happy day.	"
Oh what a happy day.	
Oh what a happy day, what a happy day, what a happy day.	"

The song was a simple expression of the pupils' emotions prior to the installation of a legitimate village chief. It was also in a sense symbolic in that the actions of the Sub-Divisional Officer indicated a return to a peaceful village and perhaps a guarantee of future village progress. Thus the day was lovely, beautiful and everyone was happy.

After the song, the chief in full costume was led to his seat by a group of women and men. He sat between a man and a woman, and his chair stood on a lion's skin and he placed his feet on a leopard's skin. Thus he symbolized his authority. His



Picture Number 3. The Sub-Divisional Officer reads his speech to the people of Massaka and Makango Villages.



Picture Number 4. The sub-Divisional Officer officially installs the chief of Makango Village.

brother read a welcome address which summarised the history of Makango village and contained the biography of the chief. This address was followed by another from the Sub-Divisional Officer. After repeating his usual message, he drew attention to the roles of legitimate chiefs, which included the power to report culprits to the government administration, to maintain order and peace at the village level, to collect money from the sale of tax coupons, to rule with wisdom and justice and to submit annual reports of administrative failures and successes. He forewarned villagers that those who violated the accepted principles would be severely punished. He then moved to the chief, held his right hand and declared him the legitimate chief of Makango village (see pictures number 3 and 4). Applause followed from all directions, and then friends and relatives presented gifts. The occasion portrayed the close relationship that exists between the government administrators and the local leaders.

Traditional songs and dances were then enacted. One of the songs was performed as a means through which the villagers could thank the Sub-Divisional Officer who had brought the problem of chieftaincy to conclusion by officially installing a legitimate village chief:

Njomi, njomi, njomi, njomi tata. (twice)
Tata njomi.
Njomi, njomi, njomi, njomi tata.

Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, papa. (twice)
Papa thank you.
Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you papa.

Others songs contained warnings to the chief and asked him to forgive those who were against him during the period of political contest. They maintained that failing to do so would have negative consequences as the villagers would replace him with a more responsible person.

The merry-making that followed was interrupted by a villager who spontaneously used a song to rebuke the government administrators for their continuous exploitation of the rural inhabitants. He complained that the villagers were forced to contribute money for entertainment expenses. Besides, the Sub-Divisional Officer would collect pigs, goats, fowl and other delicacies from the village, while villagers would receive nothing in return. He blamed the government for squandering

the nation's money and encouraging government officers to embezzle funds, when the poor farmers who cultivate cash crops lacked basic necessities. He reprimanded the government and called for a halt to the exploitation of the poor villagers. In a chorus some of the villagers repeated that their village and the Bima were not benefiting from the government, rather, they were a source for exploitation. This villager and his supporters were fully aware of the fact that if they abused the Sub-Divisional Officer openly, the gendarme and the police officers would inflict physical torture on them. Thus they used a song to express their discontent. Although members of the entourage understood the underlying meaning of the song, the gendarme and the police officers could not whip the singers, as etiquette prevented an intervention in what was ostensibly entertainment. Also, perhaps, the songster intentionally wanted to test the extent to which the newly installed chief would be loyal to his own people.

In rebuking the Sub-Divisional Officer, the villager and his supporters disrupted the occasion and the leaders of the village were extremely bitter. The anger of the leaders proved to the villagers, particularly the vocalist and his supporters, the extent to which the chief would protect the interests of the administration, rather than the interests of his own people. The incident also proved the extent to which the people had become unmanageable.

I enquired why indiscipline prevailed in the village. The newly installed chief responded by claiming that it was difficult to discipline culprits as their forefathers did. He asserted that during the era of their ancestors, they used mystical power to discipline recalcitrant youths and women. He emphasised that things had now changed, that the young people and women had become very unmanageable. Asked why he could not now use mystical power to discipline the culprits, he claimed that even if he had mystical power, it was unjustifiable to take the law into his own hands. He said his duty was to draw the government administrators' attention to the problems since they were charged with the responsibility of meting out punishment. Moreover, methods were always ineffective as criminals often escaped into the forest when they noticed the arrival of government security officers. Trying to pursue them into the forest was a task no security officer would undertake irrespective of how attractive were the rewards.

Furthermore the absence of a road link to Mundemba made transport of criminals difficult.

The administration could only use canes to punish culprits, a punishment not considered by local people to be harsh in comparison with imprisonment. For example, during this particular visit, a villager abused the chief of Massaka village in the presence of the visitors. The Sub-Divisional Officer ordered gendarme and police officers to whip the culprit. This incident indicated that the administration's attempt to portray absolute authority in the villages was empty. Thus the administration could only mete out effective punishment if it established effective police and gendamerie posts in the region or if the government constructed a road linking Mundemba and the Bima region.

With few weapons to effect punishment, Bima and Ngolo chiefs had limited power over their people. Unlike the fons of the north-west and western provinces of Cameroon, or even the chiefs of the Swat Pathans, both of whom have authority over land and consequently over the people (Alemetu 1989 and Barth 1986: 9), chiefs in Bima and Ngolo regions have no authority over land. The forest is the property of every member of the community, especially as the people have been hunters predominantly, and do not need many acres of land to cultivate food crops. Moreover, the fall in the price of cash crops had forced the people to reduce the acres of land used for cash crops.

The songs enacted at Makango village bring us back to the role of theatre. The people used theatre to express heartfelt satisfaction with the Sub-Divisional Officer for officially installing a legitimate chief in the village, dissatisfaction with the government officer's visits to villages, and warnings to the newly installed chief to abide by the norms of the people. Perhaps, these villagers and pupils were fully aware of the fact that they were people with no political and economic power, thus a dialogue between them and their superiors was too remote. Thus they resorted to songs and dances as channels through which they could express their views. To these different groups of singers, theatre was the only means through which they could express their own appreciation of good deeds and warn against future mis-conduct and mis-use of power. They are like the Balinese people who consider theatre a valuable asset through which they can express socio-economic, political and cultural opinions (George 1991).

On our way to Mundemba, we stopped in many small villages. Although some of the villages were aware of the tour, they deliberately refused to entertain the entourage. I suggest that these were 'extremists' who believed the tour was futile. They claimed that as a result of the absence of a road, most of the young men and women who would have entertained the entourage had emigrated to the cities, leaving only the aged behind. Moreover, the cocoa and coffee farms which provide incomes had been deserted for want of human labour, which the old people could no longer provide. Moreover, Korup's staff had forbidden people from carrying out hunting expeditions, so they had no money to entertain visitors.

On the whole, the visitors' receptions in the village of Makango surpassed those received at Fabe, Esoki Bima and the smaller villages. Two reasons account for the different receptions.

First, the entourage was received by a legitimate chief in Makango Village, whereas the entourage was received by acting chiefs in the other villages. This suggests that the absence of legitimate chiefs in villages created political problems in the villages. Furthermore, unlike the other villages which had nothing to look forward to from the visitation, the people of Makango village were full of expectations, particularly as their chief was to be installed by the Sub-Divisional Officer. Hence the different receptions given to the entourage at Fabe, Esoki Bima and Makango villages prove that the villagers expected something in return from the government officers' visits. It was generally believed that the government officers' visits to the villages were one of the means through which the government exploited villagers. This belief is reiterated in a national performance in a subsequent chapter.

Secondly, the government's failure to pay for the farmers' cash crops had exacerbated poverty in the villages. Thus the people were more concerned with using the little money they had to feed themselves than in using it to entertain visitors. There is a popular proverb in the Keyang (a group in the South West Province in Cameroon) language that when a nursing mother is smoking and the burning coals from the pipe drop on herself and her baby, her first reaction would be to ensure that she removed the burning coals from her body prior to turning to the baby, even though the baby was screaming. The messages of the songs were therefore a warning to the party in power;

farmers could not use the little money they had to entertain government visitors or purchase tax coupons. Farmers make up at least 70% of the Cameroon population and if the government does not pay for the farmers' produce, the people will not vote for CPDM party. Furthermore, the inability of the government to pay for the farmers' produce perpetuated the acute recession in the country-side since farmers were also the important consumers of local manufactured goods such as fabric, shoes and building materials.

The Sub-Divisional Officer discussed the villagers' grievances (as portrayed in theatre and in speeches) with the Senior-Divisional Officer during the Divisional Development Meeting which was held on the 19th December 1990. The Senior-Divisional Officer in turn discussed the problem with the Minister of Agriculture. The Minister took the message very seriously and when he visited Ndian Division in later December 1990, part of the money owed to farmers was paid by the treasury. These examples suggest that theatre in this region was an effective tool of communication between villagers and the government. Indeed, Ranganath asserts that:

If (theatre is) used sensitively (with regard for cultural and religious beliefs), if the local artists could be won over to the side of the development strategies, folk entertainments could become a vital force for change in the villages. If the artists could then stir up their own people, there might be enormous potential for new dialogue - from the country's leaders to the villagers and from the villagers back to the leaders. Development efforts could then proceed outward from the villages to the calls from the capital (Ranganath 1980: 12).

It has been noted that the numerous villages reacted differently towards the entourage. Whereas the people of Fabe village were helpless in the presence of the administration as a consequence of internal political instability, the people of Esoki-Bima village entertained the visitors but did not openly ask for any concessions. Smaller villages were absolutely indifferent towards the entourage. They did not entertain the visitors with refreshment and performing arts. On the other hand, the people of Makango village welcomed the visitors whole-heartedly although a small number of disgruntled people made significant contributions which disrupted the occasion by questioning the administrators' attitude towards rural people. In addition, each of the villages was solely concerned with its own internal problems, and ignored

the plight of other villages. In this sense, the Bima Villages were not united. Having known of the Sub-Divisional Officer's visit to their region, it might have been expected that all the village chiefs would rally and discuss the problems of the entire region rather than discussing problems of the individual villages.

However, local performing artists attempted to gain a broader view overlooking the problems of individual villages and focussing instead on the plight of all the Bima. For example, the praise singer in the Bima Chiefs' Meeting called on leaders to unite and agree on the location of a market in any of the Bima village; the women's mime at Fabe village portrayed the problems of the villagers in the light of the absence of a road to the region, the old man's performance called on the Bimas to unite, to strengthen their own identity and thus develop as a whole; and the singer in Makango warned the government administrators to stop exploiting the villagers - particularly the Bima. This shows that Bima performing artists are capable of reuniting a disunited community. They are the seers, the moralists and the servants of the community. Their function is to serve the community, to encourage unity among the Bimas, and to encourage the people to develop.

Turning to the issues raised in the theatre, the performances in the Bima region reveal three main issues. First, is the absence of primary schools and the lack of school equipment. This issue is apparent in the old man's choreographic performance and in the pupils' song at Esoki Bima. The educational officer (a Ngolo) who could convince the government to establish primary schools in the Bima region forcefully emphasized that the establishment of primary schools in scattered Bima villages would imply gross misuse of the government's funds, as well as a neglect of the other priorities the government recognised. Considering the antagonism that exists between the Ngolo and the Bima people, it is not surprising that this Ngolo educational officer would prevent the government from establishing primary schools in small, scattered Bima villages.

The number of houses in Bima villages ranges from three to three hundred. Asked why the smaller villages cannot amalgamate and establish a larger political unit which might attract amenities such as a government primary school, people responded that such an initiative was unthinkable for many reasons. Firstly, they maintained that it would be a betrayal, and a sacrilegious act, to abandon the land of their ancestors as

they (the ancestors) sacrificed much in establishing the villages. Secondly, they would be regarded as low-status strangers by the host villagers. Moreover, there would be problems of rights over specific portions of the forest as each village already had a portion where it carries out hunting expeditions. Furthermore, the class of dignitaries would not accept being ruled by the dignitaries of the host villages, thus exacerbating the problem of leadership. Lastly, during the rainy season when rivers and streams overflow their banks, the inhabitants of villages close to the rivers and streams emigrate to safety to those villages on higher ground. Consequently, the numerous small villages would continue to exist. Since the Bima perceive education as the crux of development, the Bima and their region would remain underdeveloped.

Secondly, the performances portrayed political instability in the Bima region. A relevant point here is that the introduction of a monetary system and wage labour has tremendously weakened the authority of the chiefs. Most of the chiefs would prefer a wage-earning job rather than their administrative duties, and many legitimate chiefs delegated their functions to acting chiefs in their absence. Elsewhere in Cameroon, the fons of the North-West and Western Provinces have managed to reconcile traditional and western values. For instance, one of the fons of Bafut in the North-West Province is a graduate from the University of Yaounde. In spite of the fact that he had studied law, and could have got a job, he opted to return to his kingdom and rule over his people. In contrast, chiefs in the Bima and Ngolo regions, and the South-West Province at large have surrendered such responsibilities. This is one of the reasons why there was and still is a high degree of juvenile delinquency and political instability in the Bima villages, and underdevelopment in the Bima region as a whole.

In the old man's performance, he rhetorically questioned when the Bima people would retrieve their lost glory. In a sense the old man here was questioning the place of the Bima people among the groups that constitute Mundemba Sub-Division, as well as its position in the country. The performance was a sorrowful search for identity and development. He was effectively persuading the Bima to unite socially, economically and politically. The plight of Fabe village symbolises the fate of Bima people. Thus, unless the Bima people unite, create their own identity and take up the initiative to develop themselves, crusaders of development will not come from the moon to lead

them. Until these intellectual and physical initiatives are carried out, the Bima people, like those in the village of Fabe, would continue to remain a laughing stock, the subject of ridicule and a continuous source of exploitation for their neighbours and the nation.

Thirdly, the women's mime depicted the problems associated with the absence of roadway in the Bima region. This issue was repeated and emphasized in speeches.

Faced with rebellious settlers' villages within Bima region, the absence of a road, primary schools, the activities of Korup, together with the government inability to pay fully for the people's produce, Bima local performing artists were using their folk media (dances, songs, mimes), as an important medium through which they could attain socio-economic and political development, strengthen their group identity and also channel their grievances to the government and their hostile settler villages, as well as to arrive at positive solutions with Ngolo settlers' villages and the government.

1. A. (ii). Village Performances in the Ngolo Region.

The theatrical performances in the Ngolo region were watched and filmed during the Ngolo Cultural and Development Association (NGUDA) festival which was held at Toko village (the region's headquarters) in December 1990.

The Ngolo clan boasts of a considerable number of elites. These elites created an association called NGUDA. Its role is to unite the Ngolos, to encourage them to embark on development projects and also to strengthen the group identity and culture. NGUDA Festival takes place annually, but the venue is not fixed. Each of the Ngolo villages has the privilege of hosting the festival in turn. For example, in 1989, Meka Ngolo (a Ngolo village in Bima region) hosted the festival. The road leading to Meka Ngolo lies at one of the junctions along the Ekondo Titi and Mundemba road. Due to the ease of accessibility, the number of participants that year was very encouraging. It was during this particular NGUDA festival that the idea emerged of bulldozing a road to Toko (the regional headquarters situated in one of the most remote areas), and members unanimously agreed that the forthcoming NGUDA annual festival should be held at Toko. Surveyors and civil engineers from the region carried out feasibility studies for the road. Bulldozers and scrapers were hired, but the road had not been

completed. The road begins at Dikombe Balue (the headquarters of the Balue region to Toko).

It is worth noting that the Ngolo were emulating the Balue example. The Balue contributed money in the late 1970s for the purpose of bulldozing a road from Ekombe 3 Corners (one of the villages along the Kumba and Ekondo Titi road) to Dikombe Balue. The presence of this road linking a fertile region to the rest of the country attracted businessmen and farmers from Eastern Nigeria, North West and Western Provinces and from neighbouring divisions of Meme and Manyu. The combination of these new settlers and a low level of rural exodus led to villages becoming densely populated. The increase in population also resulted in an increase in the diversification of agricultural production. For instance, besides the main cash crops of cocoa and coffee, farmers embarked on cultivating large quantities of food crops. They also cultivated fruit trees which turned out to be very lucrative. The increase in agricultural produce necessitated the creation of local markets where food crops could be sold. Thus traders from Douala (the economic headquarters of Cameroon) and from other parts of the country purchased large quantities of local produce from the markets. Furthermore, the Bamileke from Western Province and Ibos from Nigeria established stalls, night-clubs, bars, football clubs and other social organisations in the area. Moreover the different villages in the region contributed funds and paid for the supply of pipe borne water and electricity. Rural inhabitants in this region and villages situated on the boundaries of the Balue region have enjoyed the services of Cameroon Radio and Television for a number of years.

The economic activities in the Balue region attracted different sorts of people - the old, the young and the working class. Unlike the Bima people who appeared to be frustrated, it was the reverse with the Balue people. Thus following the example of the Balues, the idea of launching an appeal for contributions for the purpose of bulldozing a road to Toko was not new among the various communities that make up Ndian Division.

The road project was partially realised in 1990, when NGUDA festival was scheduled for the period 27th - 31st December 1990 at Toko. A temporary hall was built for the occasion and seats were installed and arranged in a circle. The high

participants occupied prime position and the arena was used by speakers and performing artists. Various sections were occupied by the government administration, the chiefs and dignitaries of the Ngolos, the guests, untitled men, and women and children.

Before the occasion formally commenced, a prayer was recited by everyone and this was followed by a ritual performed by the eldest Ngolo. Prior to enacting the ritual, a jug of a concoction made up of certain herbs, white clay, mud, fresh green leaves, a bottle of whisky, a bottle of kange (local whisky), a bottle of palm-wine, a bottle of water, kola-nuts, were placed in front of the diviner. The diviner began by taking some of the concoction and mixing it with mud. Later he uttered some incantations. He put the mixture on the leaves, then broke kola-nuts which he threw on the floor. The kola-nuts fell facing upwards, an indication that the ancestors and gods have accepted the offer. He then poured some palm-wine on the ground. Having done that, he called on the ancestors and gods to protect the land and the visitors. When I asked him the purpose and function of the ritual, this was his reply:

Ma pikin, this ting na for beg wea papa dem weh de be dong die and god dem sai make dey take dis tranger dem back for their country, and for tank dem weh give we book people dem weh dee bring fine ting for we We bee tank dem weh give wee dis ground weh ee dee give we plenty chop, and for beg dem for make woman dem born plenty pikin and make wea ground give we chop as ee dee do ---

Translation

My child, the primary intent of enacting the ritual is to implore the ancestors and gods to protect the visitors who have attended the festival, and to thank the ancestors and gods who have blessed the region with intelligent children. These elites bring good things, such as a motorway to the region. We were thanking the ancestors and gods who have endowed the land with fertile soil so that they should not hold back fertility and procreation...

Thus according to the eldest Ngolo who performed this ritual, the message of the performance was directed towards supernatural beings (the ancestors and gods), and not to man.

Young educated Christians who often watch such rituals performed are sceptical about their efficacy. Nevertheless, they believe that rituals strengthen a group's identity

and provide a means through which the people can call on the ancestors and the gods to protect them. Thus they still revere these rituals, and believe that failure to perform them might result to devastating consequences. For example, if one of the Ngolos ignores the ritual and has an accident or becomes ill immediately after the ritual, he or she might inwardly believe that the accident or illness was a retribution from the ancestors and gods. Thus, for the purpose of evading the wrath of the supernatural beings, rituals are revered even by young educated Christians in this region. To them, observing rituals is like washing one's face, or brushing one's teeth before going to an office.

The propitiatory ritual was closely followed by a welcome address from the chief of Toko. This was followed by the introduction of Ngolo elites who rendered important duties in other parts of Cameroon. They were also given responsible positions on this occasion. (Whereas Burnham points out that "a Gbaya lost to the town is therefore often a Gbaya lost to the community" (Burnham 1980: 285), the Ngolo elites who rendered services in other regions were not considered as lost children. They return to their natal region to visit their parents and also to develop the region). One elite played the role of a director and organiser of performing activities, another was responsible for providing accommodation for guests, particularly the government administrators. The sharing of responsibilities among the elites indicated that no one person could dominate the occasion.

Having selected and introduced the leaders and their various duties, the next item on the agenda was the introduction of different types of traditional food. This was done by an educated indigenous woman. I suggest that the purpose of the presentation was to enhance the identity and the cultural values of the Ngolo. During the introduction, the group of women who carried the food enacted traditional songs. One of the songs called on the local people to welcome the guests, and to provide the guests with food and drinks:

Kwereke, mgvnuu.
Ya pende ai (twice).
Makara mani wa beri gbvori.

People have come, receive them.
If the stomach is empty.
You cannot be happy.

These songs were accompanied by dances, designed to make the participants enjoy their meals. Furthermore, during the presentation of foods, participants reacted differently to the different types of food. When the lady presented one of the rare delicacies, the audience reacted by clapping. Furthermore, when she endeavoured to use a European accent, the audience jeered indicating that the Ngolos want every Ngolo to use the Ngolo accent. On the other hand, when she presented a common traditional food, the audience remained mute. A stranger could predict the types of food which the Ngolo admired most. My prediction was confirmed when the delicacies were served to the government administrators, chiefs, dignitaries and the Ngolo elites.

The presentation of food was closely followed by one of the grand rituals - the ekwe society's performance. However, since women were neither allowed to see the object mgbe nor permitted to follow the men to the river, I am ignorant of men's activities in the river. Thus my description is limited to the return of the members of the society from the river with mgbe. Before I proceed with the description, it is worth mentioning that the members of the society fetch mgbe from the river only during an event that marks either a grand occasion or an emergency. Thus considering the importance of NGUDA which symbolises political stability, economic progress and unity in the Ngolo region, mgbe was fetched from the river. The manner in which ekwe members fetched mgbe from the river gave the impression that it is the most important ritual in the community. It would endow the community with a sense of identity, togetherness and harmony.

When mgbe was fetched from the river, one member went ahead to announce mgbe's arrival to the entire community. The announcement indicated danger and destruction and it was directed to village enemies. The announcer danced, running backwards and forwards. It was asserted that the announcement both frightened witches and prevented people from transforming into witches. The person coming after the announcer carried a spear which he pointed in all directions, for his duty was to protect mgbe from enemies who might approach it and to destroy these enemies. The person carrying mgbe followed next, and he had a loin cloth around his waist. Mgbe was carried in an oroko (a sacred secret cup), and the bearer stared directly into the cup. Thus he walked very slowly, deliberately and slightly bent over, and it seemed that he



Picture Number 5. The ekwe members fetch mgbe from a river during NGUBDA festival of December 1990.



Picture Number 6. The modern musician in action during NGUDA Festival of December 1990.

could not lift his eyes from the cup, even if he was irritated by soldier ants (see picture number 5). The wife of the bearer asserted that in the former times if bearer stumbled, fell and broke the oroko, mgbe would return to the river and would only be placated by the extermination of the carrier's entire family. Nowadays, however, the family must give cows in sacrifice. Mgbe's carrier was trained for his duty, yet, on the day the object was to be fetched from the river, the entire community and particularly the carrier's family was anxious.

I enquired why a person should run the risk of carrying the object. The wife of mgbe's carrier replied that the duty was hereditary. Thus if one's father had been mgbe's carrier, the son would succeed after the father's death. She added that no one had ever refused, for it is a position of prestige for the family.

Other members followed closely behind mgbe's carrier. Their function was to paddle an invisible canoe which, the members assumed, carried the entire troupe from the river. When mgbe was fetched from the river, the area in which the members enacted the ritual became an invisible sea or river. Non-members did not approach the area and glimpsed the scene from a distance, while women were not allowed to watch the scene at all. Knowing that women were the founders of mgbe, men invented tactics of keeping the secret away from them. Thus during this performance, a police commissioner helped to film from a distance for I was not allowed to view the proceedings. Asked why they cannot reveal the secret, members claimed that the secret surrounding the ekwe society provided the community with a sense of security, identity and solidarity, and so the society was the heart of their community. In this respect, revealing the secret would imply tearing the values of the community apart. Members of the ekwe society held similar views to Bena Bena men who believed that if women and children knew the secrets of nama cult, the whole structure of male superiority would be threatened (Langness 1977: 12).

Although mgbe's mystique is presently questioned in the society at large, its importance to this community is unquestioned because the women and children agree that it holds the community together. In this respect mgbe plays a similar function to nama cult in the New Guinea Highlands. Read explained that :

...the nama was predicated on the assumption that women knew the secrets [of nama] but went along with the charade because they somehow must have sensed that power of society itself at work" (Read quoted in Langness 1977: 3-22).

When Mgbe finally entered its house etana, there was a lot of jubilation, dancing and merry-making. It was a triumph for its members. Ekwe members danced in a dignified manner, shook their bodies, moved slowly and expressed messages through the use of sign language.

The fetching of mgbe from the river by members of the ekwe society was closely followed by competitive traditional dances and a musical and dance theatre by an indigenous modern musician named Etuka Alias Tukamo (see picture number 6). He used the Oroko language to compose songs based on the problems in the Ngolo region.

The first song was a direct plea to the people of Ngolo to return to their natal land. He lamented the fact that the villages were deserted ⁴ and that the only person left in the village was old Besumbu. He was alone, tired and weak. He was also sleeping. Like old Besumbu, the Ngolo region was tired and weak. It was also sleeping. The sweet rhythms from the drums which were usually heard on Sundays have ceased to exist. Besumbu called the names of those - Mbala, Sango Mwese - who have abandoned the land. He informed the people that he was left to carry out all the various duties on the land. However, since he was old, weak and tired, he tended to watch the approach of days and nights in silence. In this sense, old Besumbu had no future. Again, like old Besumbu, the Ngolo region had no future.

The musician began by calling on the people to listen to his message and also to join him in the dance. Having said this, he made a direct plea to the people to reflect on the enchantments (the music of the drums, the beauty of the twilight of the region) which might entice them to arrest the problem of rural exodus. The song went as follows:

Okaka ni cha ni ji di tapha.

Bato ba bha teri o moki ba sa tumbi.
Ba kari di saka.

Ba moi di boa ni miso.
Okaka ni cha ni ji di tapha.

The people should listen to what I have come to say.

Very few people are left in the village.
As a result of the quest for a new style of life.

People open your eyes.

The people should listen to what I have come to say.

Ba moi sakaka ni.	My friends, come on and dance.
Ba Ngolo sakaka ni.	Ngolo please come on and dance.
Besumbu a nangaka iyo.	Besumbu is sleeping.
Nye mari chicha moki qua qua.	You have all left the village.
Nja a so bhaka ngomo pha sundi.	Who will beat the drums on Sunday.
Mba bhiti nderi wange.	I am left alone.
Mbala mba bhiti nderi wangea.	Mbala I am left alone.
Di bora choma teh Sango Wase.	To do everything Sango Wese.
Oma mokoko chi jeri.	The twilight comes.
Oma bindi qua qua na mabola.	Darkness falls with Mabola.

This situation was similar to that in the smaller villages in the Bima region where the young population had deserted the area, and the cocoa farms were left untended. The Ngolo modern musician was also calling on the Ngolos to return to the Ngolo land. Both the Bima and Ngolo regions were experiencing a high rate of rural exodus among other regions, such as Manyu people in Cameroon. A high rate of rural exodus seriously affected the economy of the nation. I have earlier hinted that agriculture is the backbone of the country's economy. Therefore these youths who emigrated from the villages were the people whose labour was needed in this sector. Furthermore, when the youths arrived the cities, they could not effectively be integrated into the urban system because the urban system demanded specialised skills. As a result, an alarming and soaring number of rural migrants roamed the urban streets. Rural areas were making efforts to reduce this exodus, and the inhabitants of Ngolo were doing this by developing their villages so as to attract the young population to remain. This in turn would help the government with the problem of urban over-population and also increase the national income. In this respect, local theatre organizers were using theatre to encourage the country's progress.

The next song by the musician reminded the Ngolo people that they were people of the same family and they should unite. Hence whether they lived in Bima region, in Ndiva or in Toko, they were obliged to come together and to think of themselves as Ngolos. He informed them that one hand could not tie a bundle, and one pillar could not be used to construct a house. According to the musician, communities existed in the minds of its members, and the geographical locality of Ngolos did not matter. What mattered was the consanguinity which spurred unity amongst the Ngolos' offsprings

and their desire to develop the region. In this sense, the Ngolos who lived in the Bima region should not perceive themselves as Bimas, but as Ngolos ⁵.

The singer also drew the people's attention to the fact that the absence of roads in the region was the major problem befalling the people, especially as they had to carry cocoa and coffee on their heads to Mundemba. He then called on NGUDA to address the problem since it was a difficult task for men and women to carry food and cash crops:

Se ba susu moto moko.	We should come together. We are all brothers.
Ba Ndiba na ba Ndiva, ba Toko.	Those in Ndiba. Those in Toko
Ba Bima.	Those in Bima.
Se ba susu moto Moko.	We should come together. We are all brothers,
Dikonjo diyoko di sa kataka rombo.	One cannot tie a bundle with one hand.
Moré na moko mo sa rougaka ndabo.	One cannot construct a house with one stick.
Etafo cha njea e [tikiseke] se.	One cannot build a house with one stick.
Etafo cha njea e roko etafo énene.	Let's come together and form a group.
Na NGUDA, etafo cha njea, efafo énene.	For NGUDA, the road problem has been a hassle.
Di tongo caco na coffee Di bura o.	Carrying cocoa and coffee to Mundemba
Mundemba. Ekambi be rere.	has been difficult.
Etafo cha ti ekiseke NGUDA.	It is disturbing to NGUDA.

This musician's call to Ngolo settlers in other regions to strengthen Ngolo identity by participating in development projects in the Ngolo region exacerbated the anger of neighbouring Bimas. Ngolo settlers (such as Meangwe Two, a Ngolo village, see page 82) in the Bima region intentionally refused to participate in Bima development projects. Rather, they preferred to participate in development projects (such as contributing funds for a roadway project) in the Ngolo region, and disregarded the fact that they had settled in Bima region. The Bima abhorred this lack of participation by Ngolo settlers. The Bimas and Ngolo settlers engaged in continuous violent confrontations, as the former wanted the latter to leave its land or to participate actively in their development projects. This issue was implicitly raised as a main issue in the old man's performance in Fabe village in the Bima region. Such problems, however, did not arise for the Ngolos, nor did they figure in the performances presented here in the Ngolo region.

The audience responded to the Ngolo musician's songs by clapping and dancing, and they declared that his messages were valid. During an interview with the musician after the performance, he maintained that since NGUDA had merely bulldozed a track, the people of Ngolo should contribute more funds for the completion of the road project. The songs, he suggested were intended to celebrate NGUDA's achievements, to encourage the people to do more and also to encourage the people of Ngolo to strengthen Ngolo identity. Such performances contributed actively to the promotion of self-help and local initiatives.

It is worth noting that despite the number of elites among the Ngolo, some of the indigenous people have never seen bicycles and cars. Furthermore, the Cameroon government encourages civil servants and workers in private firms to return to their natal land on annual leave. The government, for example, does this by providing transport costs to all the members of an employee's family. However, during annual holidays, only a few workers (such as civil servants, workers in the plantations and so on) return to their natal land. The major problem of transportation means that quite often wives and children do not accompany returnees to the villages. Thus there are many Ngolo children in other parts of the country who do not know their natal land. Furthermore returnee workers find it difficult to bring back to the villagers supplies and consumer goods available in the cities. More importantly, when any respectable Cameroonian dies, the corpse is supposed to be buried in the person's natal land; and more specifically the natal village. For example, the late Mrs Biya's corpse was conveyed to her village. Thus when a deceased person's region is not developed, friends who accompany the corpse to the village later abuse members of the region because their region is extremely underdeveloped. Faced with these numerous problems, one can see why Ngolos and Bimas have engaged in using theatre and other forms of media to sensitize their communities to develop their respective regions.

The songs performed at the NGUDA festival were aimed at encouraging unity among the people of Ngolo and also at promoting economic progress. Moreover, the fact that performing arts ended with modern songs and dances indicated Ngolos' aspiration for change. However, the concept of change did not imply a disregard for the cultural and traditional values that knitted a community together and which endowed it

with its own identity. Hence the change must be constructive. In this respect, traditional performances were closely followed by modern music and dance theatre, and the latter borrowed much (in terms of language, the use of the environmental milieu) from traditional performances and from traditional Ngolo cultural values.

Unlike the Bima people who were helpless in embarking on economic projects, such as the establishing of primary schools as a means of increasing the number of elites or clearing land for a road, the Ngolo have achieved both. The Ngolos have had a considerable degree of success in their social, economic and political development projects. It is generally worth noting that although the Bima and Ngolo considered themselves as 'Western Orokos', each group was perpetually endeavouring to assert its own identity and to encourage development in its own region. This is clearly discernible in their respective performances.

I. B. VILLAGE PERFORMANCES IN MFOU SUB-DIVISION IN THE FRANCOPHONE ZONE.

This part describes and analysis village performances in Mfou Sub-Division in the Francophone zone. The part is divided into two sections. Section (i) provides the background information about the Megang group performance. Section (ii) describes and examines the performances.

1. B. (i). The Social Background of the Megang Group's Performances.

The background information for Mefou Division has been provided in the introductory chapter. This section is primarily concerned with describing and analysing the Megang group's performances which were enacted during fieldwork. As earlier indicated, I watched the performances on 11th February 1991, the National Youth Day. The performances were enacted on the playground (the venue where the march past, traditional dances and sports were performed). Above all, it was where the Senior-Divisional Officer stood on the platform and addressed the population. After the march past and the address, people dispersed to eat lunch. They reassembled at 4 p.m to watch or participate in traditional dances and sports. It was during this occasion that I watched the Megang group's performance.

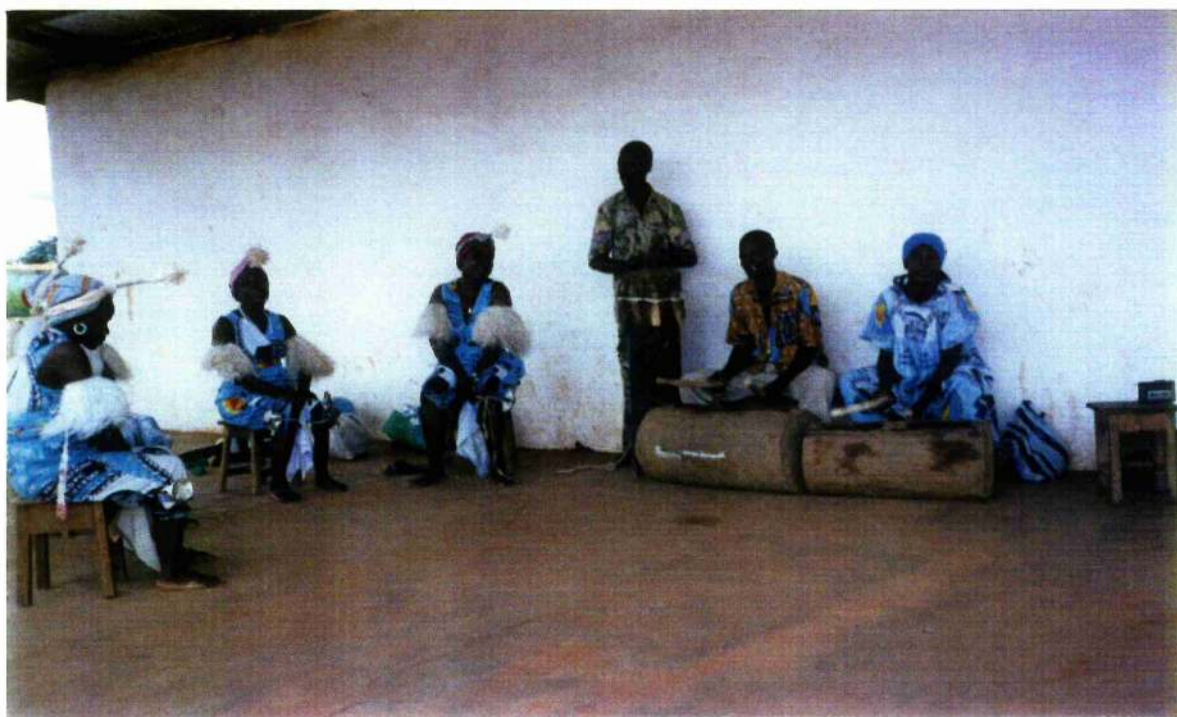
There were several dancing groups. Each group consisted of singers, dancers, traditional pianists, and drummers. Most of the groups enacted the Ewondo dance and also used the 'Ewondo' language. Although each Ewondo dance was very similar, a group's style and costume distinguished it from others. For example, one group wore local fabric sewn in the form of short trousers. They tied the same cloth around their chests, and wore large beads around their waists. Each dancer styled her hair in one lock. Many of the people in this region have long hair and this feature is used to good effect in their dance. Each dancer plaited his or her hair in one lock. A dancer bent, then swung his head, backwards sideways and forwards, ensuring that the lock of hair moved in accordance with the style. The dancers shook their waists forward, sideways

and backwards, and gyrated their chests with agility but also in a stylish manner. Occasionally they danced like satisfied birds returning to their nests at dusk. One group wore local fabric caba (long dresses sewn in the form of maternity pleated dresses). Members of this group tied headscarves around their waist as Cameroon women do when they are preparing for a fight. These groups made more use of their chest than other parts of their bodies. Another group wore rafia skirts and covered their chests with rafias designed in the form of short blouses. They tied some of the rafia on their hands and legs, and danced with their heads.

Amongst these various groups was the Megang group. The leader of the Megang group maintained that the group was initially organised by lepers. They were an outcast community, forced to live in isolation from the villagers. They created songs and dances for three reasons. First, performances served as a means through which the lepers could entertain themselves. Secondly, performances were used as a means of celebrating their own achievements. Thirdly, performances served as a medium through which they could articulate the problems of leprosy and the shortcomings of the able-bodied people. In subsequent years, the poor in the community learnt of the Megang group's performance and adapted it for similar motives, such as to assert an identity, as entertainment and as a means of calling on the administrators to mete out justice in the community.

The Megang group was the one that attracted a large audience because of its style and costume. The group wore local fabric with the image of the President printed on the fabric. Each dancer wore soft rafia around her arms and tied pieces of cloth around her legs and hands, and a bell around her leg such that when she danced, the bell jingled. She tied a red piece of cloth on her head and placed a soft rafia cap on top of the piece of cloth. She held a piece of cloth in her hands, and went barefoot. The only difference between real lepers and the Megang group was that the dancers did not place dishes for donations in front of them as real lepers would do. The loud noise that had characterised the festival atmosphere gradually lessened once the Megang group entered the arena.

Anyone who has visited Yaounde and who has gone to the markets, particularly the Marché Centrale, must have seen lepers sitting along the road, dancing and begging



Picture Number 7. The Megang group's performance at Mfou on 11th February 1991.



Picture Number 8. The leader of the Megang group in action.

money from the able-bodied people. In the old days, lepers were isolated from the community of able-bodied people, and were considered as outcasts from the community. Any contact between lepers and able-bodied people was an abomination. Nowadays, lepers are allowed to sit by the road side and beg money from able-bodied people. Lepers make able-bodied people believe that the former have supernatural power which could be maliciously used to curse able-bodied people. This belief has indeed induced fear of lepers in able-bodied people and has not led to them being despised. No able person (even a pregnant woman) would spit in the presence of lepers. If she did the lepers might think that she spat as a result of their abhorrent presence, and might curse the baby in her womb. The only way to avoid lepers is to refrain from visiting the areas where they sit and beg money. But lepers sit at strategic places. For example, lepers sit at the entrance of Cameroon Radio and Television and beg money. It is therefore difficult to avoid them.

Lepers enjoy entertaining able-bodied people with their dances. On several occasions, pedestrians stop and watch the lepers dance. However, in spite of the efforts made by lepers and able-bodied people to lessen the gap between the two groups, lepers are still considered the outcasts of the community and intermarriage between the two groups is forbidden.

When the Megang group appeared in the dancing arena, its seated position, their costumes and style attracted a large audience (see pictures numbers 7 & 8). I suggest that some spectators watched the performance with curiosity, since they believed that lepers were considered the outcast of the community whose songs very few people took the trouble to understand and this group was their mouthpiece. Some spectators who were perspiring profusely under the hot sun declared that the Megang group represented the people, but failed to add that the government officers who sat at the shaded platform represented the privileged class. Indeed, spectators spontaneously identified themselves with members of the Megang group and were interested to listen to the message of the Megang group and to watch the administrators' response.

The drummers sat in one section. They expressed messages through the language of drums; these drums talk and the messages were understood only by members of the Megang group. The singers occupied another section and used

figurative language to express their messages. They also used the Ewondo language as a medium of expression. Two reasons account for the use of the Ewondo language. The singers intentionally portrayed that the Megang group was part of the dominant country's group, made up of the indigenous people of the Centre and South Provinces. The fact that the President of Cameroon is from the Centre Province and the administrative capital is Yaounde (a region in the Centre Province) made the Megang group believe that the 'Ewondos' and their region dominated the culture and politics in the country. Therefore any one who did not understand the Ewondo language was a stranger. The Ewondo language was therefore used as a symbol of regional unity. Secondly, most villagers in the Centre Province who come to the city to sell their food crops do not understand the French language. Thus they speak Ewondo language to their customers. Perhaps, the singers were implying that they were the ones who have not acquired western education, and thus condemned to remain the disadvantaged class in the community. In either case, the singers used the Ewondo language to strengthen the identity of the indigenous people in the Centre and South Provinces as well as to portray the identity of the poor.

The dancers sat on benches in a circle. The bench on which the leader sat stood in the middle. The dance was performed in a sitting position since the performers portrayed themselves as lepers. The style involved sitting on a bench and dancing with the hands, chest, head, waists, stomach and expressing messages through gestures and facial expressions.

The messages of the drums which were accessible only to the Megang group, the singers' deliberate use of Ewondo language which was understood by few spectators together with the use of theatrical language (bodily movements and facial expressions) meant that the messages of the Megang group's performance were understood only by the Ewondo people, spectators who understood the Ewondo language, those who were versed in the language of theatre and others who understood the contemporary social, economic and political issues in the country. As a result, the audience's response was less positive ⁶ compared to the audience's response to the performances at Bima and Ngolo regions.

After the performance, the leader of the group translated the songs into the French language for my benefit. With the exception of one interpretation from some members of the audience, the interpretations of the songs are solely mine.

1. B. (ii). Description and Analysis of the Megang Group's performances.

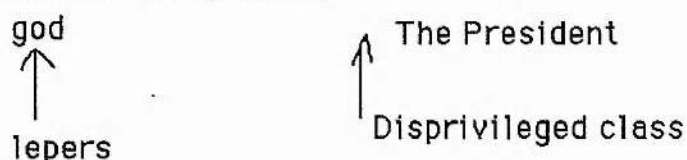
The first song to be enacted was entitled Za awu me loe, za a lone ma? (Who is calling for me?):

Za awu me loe za a lone ma?	Who is calling for me?.
Ma woke lone.	I am hearing a call.
Za awu me loe, za a lone ma?	Who is calling for me?

This call was ambiguous and it was from remote beings. First, the call was from a god who protected lepers and provided them with supernatural power so that they could cope with their disability. Also the call might have been death. The god must have taken pity on the helpless lepers and decided to call them to their final rest. In this respect, the call was blissful. Secondly, the Megang group could be seen as a symbol of the Cameroonian people. Thus this call was from a top remote politician, such as the President, since he too was remote from his people and the people could only reach him by answering his call. I suggest that this call was a request from the government asking the people to support the government, but was cast ambiguously in terms of a divine message.

In either case (whether the message was from the god or from the President), the call was from remote powerful beings who had the power to make their subjects answer their call, even when the subjects would not choose to answer the call. In a nutshell, this song portrayed the helplessness of people who could not reach their superiors, because the latter were too remote from the former (see diagram for illustration).

Fig 6 Remote beings and their subordinates



The second song was entitled Bidjango bi bede ma a nkol ayob (Messages are coming from the top to the bottom):

Bidjango bi bede ma a nkol ayob.
Me foe ma so ma yob ma ya ane me yalau.
Metil bidjango me lom bia Paul Biya melom bia Samengue.

Messages are coming from the top to the bottom.
We are waiting to respond.
I am responding to the messages of Paul Biya and Samengue.

This direct reference to Samengue (the General of the Armed Forces) and Biya (the President of Cameroon), who are also natives of the Centre and South Provinces, is revealing. Samengue controls the armed forces in the country whilst Biya is in overall control of the country.

The Megang group was informing the audience that the people from the Centre and South Provinces were in the dominant position in the country, and that people should only receive messages which came directly from President Biya and General Samengue. In this respect, the people and politicians from other Provinces were in a subordinate position. The song was aimed at strengthening regional identity, the identity of the people from the Centre and South Provinces as well as drawing the audience's attention to the powerful region in the country.

The Megang group's message that the Centre and South Province combined dominated other regions in the country, has indeed been rejected by Paul Biya. He has warned that although he is from the Centre and South Province, he is the President of all Cameroonians and that no one ethnic group should believe that it is in a dominant position. In an emphatic speech, he said:

By the force of circumstances and the will of God, I am from the Centre-South...It is also necessary for me to state loud and clear that if it is obvious that I was born in the Centre-South, I am the President of all Cameroonians. And by the wish of all Cameroonians from the North to the South and the East to the West, I am the President of the United Republic of Cameroon ...no one tribe can claim that it has been called upon to dominate the others, nor can any one tribe claim to be vested with legitimacy whatever to govern others (Ngoh 1988: 307-308).

The indigenous people of the Centre and South Provinces have ignored this call. Although messages to the President have to follow the appropriate procedure, from *Chef de Quartier, Chief, Sub-Prefet, Prefet, Gouverneur*, and to the *Prèsident*, quite

often, the indigenous people in these provinces disregard the normal procedure and take their cases directly to the Presidency of the Republic of Cameroon. This factor dissipates the efficacy of the intermediary political units. The song by the Megang group is an illustrative example. Although, the Megang group used the Ewondo language which was not understood by many spectators, the mere reference to President Biya and General Samengue made some spectators exclaimed. This implied that they guessed the message of the performance and abhorred it.

Secondly, the song expressed patronage: a relationship between patron and client (the people and the government). Those in the lower echelons of the hierarchy received messages from the leaders.

This song strengthened two identities: first, the identity of the indigenous people of the Centre and South Provinces, and second, the identity of the poor. However, the first identity was associated with joy, because of the advantages that accompany membership to this group. By contrast, the second identity depicted frustration. The poor were helpless. They have no option than to receive orders from the ruling class.

The third song was entitled : Tara Paul Biya ye wa ya unganyi Megang (Father Paul Biya, if you want this dance to enliven your visitors at any moment, the Megang dance is here):

Tara Paul Biya ye wa ya unganyi Megang.
Tara abel beyeir. Megang anyea?

Father Paul Biya, if you want this dance to enliven your visitors, the Megang dance is here.
Father, of the visitors do you want the Megang group to enliven your visitors?

Like the first two songs, this song was like an onion with several layers of meanings. The messages of the Megang group's performance were like political rhetoric imbued with metaphors, thus opened to several interpretations (See Wilson, 1990: 104 - 131 and Paine, 1981: 187 - 200). First, the song was a reminder to the President that while he was entertaining overseas visitors, he should also think of his people. During the French administration in Cameroon, the French administration made the people in their territory looked to it for their basic needs, such as health services, roads, schools and markets. This belief that the government should provide the people

with their basic needs still prevails in the Francophone zone, particularly in the Centre and South Provinces. Furthermore, a leader has the responsibility of looking after his people. It was on the basis of these two factors that the Megang group was asking the President to think of the people. The Megang group's request was echoed in a song entitled Bambe Die (Workers' Should Die) by Lapiro, one of Cameroon's popular musicians. In this song Lapiro drew the government's attention to the people's plight and disillusionment, and also made a direct plea to the government to look after the people. As noted earlier, the Bima and Ngolo in Mundemba Sub-Division, the former British mandate, produced theatre which encouraged villagers to initiate development projects and which overtly portrayed the people's indifference to the government (especially when the government was blind to the problems of villagers). Thus villagers in the two representative zones differed in respect of their motives for theatre and the manner in which they treated the government.

Secondly, the Megang group was ironically informing the President that the people could also entertain the President's visitors; perhaps even better than the President himself. The group was implying that while the President was discussing international economic and political issues with his visitors, the people were capable of telling the visitors the real needs of the people. The President should therefore give them a chance to inform the visitors.

Thirdly, the group regarded the visitors as the exploiters of the nation's wealth. While the President was using the country's resources to entertain his visitors, the people did not have their basic necessities; they felt neglected or ignored. The Megang group used the analogy between macrocosm and microcosm. The group represented the people whose labour was exploited by the President and in his entertainment of the visitors. Superficially, the Megang group pretended to cheer, cherish and honour the President and his visitors. Underneath this pretence, there was bitter irony, resentment and hatred. As earlier noted, a villager in Masango village used a song to abuse the government administrators who visited the Bima region. His message was clearly that the government visitors brought problems to the villagers. They made the villagers contribute funds for refreshment expenses. The Sub-Divisional Officer received goats, fowl and pigs. Meanwhile, the people received nothing in return. Everyone understood

the meaning of the song which was indeed explicit. The audience, particularly, the government visitors responded by refusing to eat the sumptuous food and to drink the fine wine which were provided by the village. But here, the Megang group did not use explicit language, thus a large percentage of the audience did not understand the underlying messages of the song. This was one of the reasons why the spectators could not respond as the audience in Makango Village.

The Megang group's messages were intended for the President. Whether the President received the messages or not, the group was satisfied that it had at least expressed its opinion. Perhaps, according to the group, the audience's response was irrelevant. This might be one of the reasons why the Megang group used the 'Ewondo' language, the President's mother tongue.

In contrast to the first three songs of the Megang, which superficially showed respect to the ruling class, the group's last three songs explicitly ridiculed politicians and the privileged class. The songs also celebrated the joy felt by the Megang group (a metaphorical representation of the people) in spite of their problems. The performances also pointed a finger at the roots of the people's problems. One of their songs was entitled Ntukuma wa dzo na metobo ya abe medzo (The chief sits on his throne, head of the court):

Ntukuma wa dzo na metobo ya abe medzo.	The chief sits on his throne, head of the court.
Eto njoe a mlo ya abok <u>megang</u> .	I, the leader of the <u>megang</u> group.
Ma fe me to eto ya abok.	I am also sitting on my bench.

As mentioned earlier, the dance was performed in a seated position, and the leader of the dance sat on a bench. The chief sat on his throne surrounded by his subjects, so the leader of the Megang group sat on her dancing chair encircled by her own subjects, the dancers. The surface meaning of the song was very explicit: the leaders ruled in their respective domains. The bench and the throne symbolised power, whilst the centre in which they stood represented authority. Thus power and authority were exercised at different levels.

This song was also like an onion which has several layers of meanings. One of the underlying meanings of this song suggested that whereas the leader of the Megang group looked after her subjects and ensured that the entire group engaged in joyous

activities, such as dancing, the chief did not look after his people; who included the Megang group. The Megang group was informing the people that the middle class, whom the people have entrusted them to rule with justice, have neglected this ideal. The Megang group was implicitly asserting that an individual from the lower strata would rule with justice.

The group was concerned with a reform in thinking. It was implicitly requesting the government to operate under an ideology which suited the concerns of the people. The group was reminding the ruling class of their neglect of high ideals, and implicitly urging them to create national political hopefulness in the citizens, and to breed citizens who would feel they could trust their leaders and also have a say in determining matters relating to social, economic, political and cultural affairs as well as having a share in the country's wealth. The comparison between the chief and the leader of the Megang group depicted the contrast between Western imported power and African indigenous power. The two leaders treated their subjects differently. In a sense, the group was implying that imported power with its associates, such as western goods and style of life corrupted, whereas the African indigenous power represented by the leader of the Megang group was ideal. The chief who was theoretically imbued with Western political ideals misused these ideals and was callous towards his subjects' well-being. By contrast, the leader of the Megang group looked after his subjects.

The Megang group was suggesting something similar to Fanon who believes that the African middle class is unlike its European counterparts who invented new machines and discovered new worlds. Fanon added that the African middle class can only contribute in a negative sense by driving posh cars and living in mansions. They cannot rescue the people from the track of poverty (Fanon, quoted in Erven 1991: 9 - 27).

The second message of the song was a piece of advice. The group implicitly asserted that people should be contented with what they have regardless of the enormous fortunes of others. Thirdly, the group was celebrating its achievements. The Megang group could be compared with Tukolor Weavers, who, besides using songs to entertain the privileged class in the community, also used songs to celebrate their own achievements and identity (Dilley 1989: 138 - 152).

The group used 'poetic licence' (Tracy quoted in White 1989: 36 and Cuddon, 1979) to mock and criticise the leaders of the country. In spite of the fact that the song portrayed elements of satire (against politicians who claim to be the people's torch bearers), the group still used refined language, coupled with deep feeling, passion and wit.

The next song was entitled: Bekoe be tari ya medzo (The pigmies have started again):

Bekoe be tari ya medzo.
Be te ouila`ane bia.
Bi bo`o man ne ne asoe.

The pigmies have started again.
They have surprised us.
In our secret society.

Prior to analysing this song, a brief description of pigmies and their associate powers is relevant. This would help in the understanding of the song. There are many pigmies in the Eastern Province in Cameroon. Ejedepang wrote:

It is probable that the earliest inhabitants of Cameroon are the pigmies, a short, hardy people who live in the forest and are astute hunters. They are now found in the extreme eastern and southern parts of Cameroon, numbering about 1500. They have created no memorable civilisation, though their survival in great independence from the other people and, still very much indulerate [sic] intrigues observers. They still live basically as they lived hundreds of years ago, living by gathering and hunting with the use of poisoned arrows and spears. Their houses are rudimentary, composed simply of structures of branches covered with leaves. They migrate with the exhaustion of game in the forest. Government encouragement of permanent settlement of pigmies has born no fruit. To date, only a handful of pigmy children have been persuaded to attend school where they are provided everything by the government. Up to 1981 only one pigmy had successfully completed primary school. They are not interested (Ejedepang 1985: 58).

The pigmies reside in the Eastern Province and show a profound interest in, and love for the forest. The forest is considered by many people in the Eastern Province as a place for unpleasant creatures (dragons, archfiends, evil spirits, monsters), and a remote habitation for the normal human life. Pigmies who love the forest and live there are considered to be one of these evil creatures. Turnbull also tells how villages near the Ituri forest consider the forest a remote, hostile, evil world inhabited by savages, and the Efe pigmies in eastern Sudan are also endowed with the reputation of cannibalism, witchcraft and sorcery (Turnbull, 1961: , 17, 18, 19, 24). Allier reports that pigmies apply poison on their arrows (Allier, 1929: 32), which also inspires fear.

In the case of the pigmies in the Eastern Province in Cameroon, people believe that the pigmies excel in the art of magic. Some people visit pigmies in their forest to seek protection by their charms. Nevertheless, because pigmies live in a remote world coupled with the people's belief that pigmies might use their magic against them, pigmies are generally feared.

This song depicted a confrontation between the pigmies and the lepers. Both are considered by the able-bodied to possess supernatural power. But in this particular situation, the lepers were helpless in this confrontation whilst the pigmies (the remote beings) were in the dominant position. Pigmies were portrayed as a remote power which intruded into the activities of helpless lepers, and also reduced the lepers to their subjects. The song depicted a sense of helplessness and protest. Indeed the performance showed that while the dance was being performed, 'pigmies' who lived in a nearby forest, heard the noise and came out. They moved towards the dancers in the hope of surprising them. The dancers cried out in despair maintaining that the pigmies had come again to disturb their secret meeting.

Lepers have succeeded in making able-bodied people believe that they possess supernatural power. From this perspective, an obvious question that cropped up was why the lepers should be helpless in the presence of pigmies. Could the helplessness of lepers be as a consequence of their physical disability which prevented them from confronting pigmies, thus making them prone to pigmies' exploitation? Could it be that because pigmies lived in a remote supernatural world among supernatural creatures, they possessed more supernatural power than lepers who lived in the mundane world? Or was the song implying that remote beings had the power to intrude into human being's activities, irrespective of the people's protests? In this song, the Megang group implicitly dealt with inexplicable spiritual and philosophical questions.

Another prominent factor portrayed in the song was the fact that although the lepers are disabled and despised by able-bodied people, they engaged in joyous activities such as songs and dances which the able-bodied people envied. This implies that happiness is not restricted to able-bodied people, and the lot of the lepers is not necessarily joyless.

Given the occasion in which the Megang group performed, and considering the audience that watched the performance, one can see how pigmies and lepers are used figuratively, to represent the privileged class and the oppressed class respectively. The pigmies (as a representation of the privileged class) claim to be physically perfect and this is interesting, as from the point of view of the majority of the population they are seen as physically imperfect as a result of their size. This theme of self-perceived perfection versus imperfection seen from without could equally be applied to the privileged class. Moreover, although the pigmies keep away from lepers for fear of being infected by the disease, they at the same time love the leper's music. Similarly, the ruling class ignores the poor but it depends on their labour for its own existence. For example, the farmers cultivate cash crops and pay taxes, which constitute the bulk of the country's revenue, and is the money used to pay civil servants' salaries. Thus the themes of avoidance and dependency were represented in this performance.

The song is symbolic of both the villagers' struggle to survive rural hardships, and the government administrators' intrusion into the villagers' daily activities, irrespective of local protests. We noted earlier that at Makango Village, a villager used a song to abuse the government officers who visited the village. This occurrence implied that villagers did not want the privileged class to disturb their peace. In the case of the lepers, they cry out in despair; a cry which the pygmies ignore - just as the rich ignores the cry of the poor. The pygmies' actions are similar to the six brothers in the song narrated by Mlama who hated their disfigured eldest brother, but the latter saved the six brothers' lives (Mlama, 1991: 193).

The song appealed to alienated deprived people and strongly opposed class stratification or the establishment of the whole bourgeois system.

The last song by the Megang group was titled Edin ene awu (To Love much is to die):

Edin ene awu.
Ve jam da, eding ene eyong jia enying.
One ding a kanse na owu asu eding te.

To love much is to die.
Love once and always.
What ever be the case, stand on it.

The message of this song was explicit - a caution to man to love moderately. Thus whether power or money or other relative needs, man's love should not be insatiable. Also, the song was advising people to hold fast to their views. People

should be like Mandela who is prepared to die for the idea of ending white domination in South Africa. Even when sentenced to a life term in prison, he held fast to his principles, urged his fellow prisoners to retain their high ideals, and managed to turn his harsh confinement into a proving-ground for greatness.

The Megang group was also advising the country's decision makers to mete out justice. According to the leader of the Megang group, the group was urging people to love moderately since excessive love for anything might eventually lead to a person's destruction. The messages of the song were again not limited to a particular geographical region or a particular ethnic group.

The Megang group was concerned with spiritual and philosophical issues, groups' identities, and a call for the dominant class to mete out justice to the poor. The Megang group could be compared with the Mkambalani people who use theatre to portray Mkambalani people's recalcitrant behaviour to the government administration (Mlama 1991: 177 -202).

One of the functions of theatre in these communities (Mundemba and Mfou Sub-Divisions) is similar to the role of rituals. I noted above that the eldest man at Toko during the NGUDA festival performed a ritual, requesting the ancestors and the gods to protect the visitors who attended NGUDA festival and to increase fertility in the land and that the Fabe women used theatre to appeal to the conscience of the government visitors. Here the Megang group was also using theatre to appeal to the conscience of the government. Since the government assumed the role of a remote superpower, the people used theatre to appeal to its conscience. Both theatre and rituals were used to address remote entities, in the one case a remote superpower (the government), in the other, remote supernatural agents (ancestors and gods); both of which had an effect on the local community, and which must be made to listen.

1. C. CONCLUSION.

In this section I will evaluate village performances in Mundemba in the Anglophone zone and Mfou in the Francophone region in terms of the themes and motives of the performances, the theatrical devices employed to convey the messages, the audience response, and the functions of the plays in the respective communities. Each of the items is discussed in a separate subheading.

1. C. (i). Themes.

The themes of the village performances in Mundemba Sub-Division and in Mfou Sub-Division reflect the needs and ideologies of the respective English-speaking and French-speaking communities. Village performances in Mundemba Sub-Division dealt with the practical needs and cultural aspirations of the people, such as encouraging the cultural identity of the group and the economic development. The performances also dealt with the absence of legitimate chiefs in the villages, and the exploitation of villagers by the government officers visiting the villages. For example, the women's mime at Fabe village dealt basically with the negative consequence of the inadequate road links to Bima region, and the praise-singer's performance at the Meeting of the Bima Chiefs called on the Bima chiefs to set aside their differences and to protect mutual interests by allowing the proposed market to be located in any of the Bima villages. The old man's performance called on the Bimas to unite and to strengthen the Bima identity, and thus addressed the question of the social, economic and political standing of the Bima among the group's neighbours. Also, the modern musician at Toko village performed a piece which called on the Ngolos to complete a road project in the Ngolo region, to unite and strengthen the Ngolo identity. Judging from the themes of the performances in the Bima and Ngolo regions, two factors are discernible. First, it is clear that each region was primarily concerned with the problems within its own region. Second, it revealed that the Bimas had more problems relative to the Ngolos. In

this respect, fewer Ngolo local performing artists engaged in producing plays which called on the Ngolos to strengthen the group identity and to develop Ngolo region.

By contrast, the Megang group in Mfou Sub-Division produced theatre that dealt specifically with issues referring to the role of a leader, the celebration of the identity of the people of the Centre and South Provinces, the portrayal of the social identity of the poor, and the plight of the poor as well as class stratification. For example, the song entitled: "Tara Paul Biya ye wa ya unganyi Megang" (Father Paul Biya, if you want this dance to enliven your visitors at any moment, the Megang dance is here) celebrated the role of leaders, regional identity and the identity of the poor.

Three factors account for the differences between the themes of the performances in the two representative zones. The first can be connected to the historical experiences of each zone. The second is as a result of the existence of local political organisations such as the Meeting of the Bima Chiefs and the Ndian Divisional Development Meeting in Ndian Division and the absence of similar local political organisations in Mefou Division. Lastly the geographical location of the two representative zones has an enormous influence on the themes of theatre.

I will begin first, with the historical experiences of each zone. During the period of British administration, a system of indirect rule was established in which chiefs and local administrators maintained authority at the local level. Together with their subjects they helped provide the basic needs of the people (such as primary schools and markets). This implies that the people were active in initiating projects on the basis of self-reliance. Even when the British administrators left Southern Cameroon, the British legacies remained intact (see Mbuagbaw 1990: 91). This is evident in the Bima and Ngolo theatre. They produce theatre that deals with their daily perceptible issues.

Under the French administration, the administrators took a jaundiced view of local politics, the judicial system, and administration. The French administration imposed on the local community the mandating country's values and culture which were foreign to the indigenous people (see Mbuagbaw 1990: 94). As a result of the administration's policy, in French-speaking Cameroon politics, economics, commerce and the legal system were highly centralised. Consequently, the indigenous people were forced to look to the government to lead them and to provide their needs. The

government provided the people's basic needs, such as health centres, schools, markets, recreational facilities, roads and other essentials. As a consequence, the people did not engage in self-reliance projects, and today, they (particularly the people in the Centre and South Provinces) seldom initiate self-reliance projects. This is evident in the Megang group performances. The themes of the performances centre around calling on the President to respect his obligations to the people, portraying the people's plight as well as celebrating the identity of the people of the Centre and South Provinces. The group also deals with philosophical issues and the relationship between the spiritual and mundane worlds.

The second factor that has created a difference in the theme of the performances in the respective representative communities emerged as a result of the existence of the creation of local political organisations, such as the Meeting of the Bima Chiefs and Ndian Divisional Development Meeting in Mundemba Sub-Division. The Meeting of the Bima Chiefs helps to strengthen the Bima identity and encourages the Bima group to develop. For example, during the Meeting of the Bima Chiefs, a praise-singer used a song to encourage the Bima chiefs to strengthen the Bima identity and agree on the location of a market in the Bima region.

Also, the government created the Divisional Development Meeting (D.D.M) and charged it with the responsibility of carrying development projects in the divisions in the country. During the Ndian Divisional Development Meeting of December 1990, the Senior-Divisional Officer congratulated groups such as the Balues who had constructed a road in the Balue region. The Senior-Divisional Officer's congratulation acted as a motivation for other groups to imitate the Balue's initiative. Ndian Divisional Development Meeting encouraged the respective groups to become aware of development projects in other regions. This awareness spurred the different groups to endeavour to strengthen their respective identities, to carry out development projects in their respective regions, and thus be able to compete with other groups. Local performing artists used theatre as a means of encouraging groups to strengthen their respective identities and develop their regions. For example, the Ngolo modern musician who attended the D.D.M used theatre to encourage the Ngolos to strengthen the group identity and complete a road project in the Ngolo region.

In contrast, similar local political organisations were not created in Mefou Division. The French Administration in Cameroon destroyed grassroots political organisations (particularly in the Centre Province) and created puppet chiefs who were estranged from their indigenous values. Moreover, the Banes and Mveles, who are the two main groups of Mfou Sub-Division, believe that the groups (such as the Boulou, Beti and Ewondo that make up the Centre and South Provinces) belong to one overarching ethnic group. This belief was strengthened when the late Ahidjo appointed Biya the President of Cameroon in 1982. Before the succession of Biya to the post of President, the Boulous, Betis, Ewondos, and others endeavoured zealously to strengthen their respective group identities. With the succession of President Biya, these groups believe they would benefit if they kept aside group identities and united as one huge group with President Paul Biya as the leader. In this respect, in Mfou Sub-Division, the Banes and Mveles have not created group political organisations such as NGUDA which strengthens Ngolo identity and also encourages Ngolo development. Consequently, even village performing artists, such as the Megang group, use theatre to strengthen the identity of the whole of the people of the Central and South Provinces and not with the intention of strengthening individual ethnic identities.

There was no D.D.M. in Mefou Division. Asked why there was one in Ndian Division and none in Mefou Division, the First Assistant Senior-Divisional Officer gave two reasons. First, the boundaries of the sub-divisions overlap with those of the other main divisions, for example Soa Sub-Division is located in Mfoundi Division. Secondly, the government did not provide adequate funds for the cost of organising such meetings. For example, participants need refreshment and travel expenses. These two reasons shattered all the hopes of creating a Divisional Development Meeting in Mefou Division. The absence of D.D.M. in Mefou Division means that the people of Mefou Division do not enjoy the advantages which D.D.M. offers to the people of Ndian Division.

Thirdly, the geographical location of the two representative zones also determined the themes of the performances in the respective sub-divisions. Mundemba Sub-Division shares a boundary with Nigeria. This makes it easier for the people to travel by sea and river to Nigeria than to travel by land to Kumba (the nearest Division

in Cameroon). Mundemba's proximity to Nigeria has an influence on the thought and attitudes of the people in Mundemba Sub-Division. Some of the villages in the Bima region believe that they are practically Nigerians and only theoretically Cameroonians. In contrast, Mfou Sub-Division is in the centre of Cameroon and the people believe that they are the real Cameroonians.

The Bimas believe that the government has neglected them. Consequently, they hate to pay taxes. Village performing artists portray the people's indifference towards the government in their performances. For example, in Esoki Bima, the dignitaries enacted a mime which portrayed village indifference towards the government. By contrast, the indigenous people in Mfou Sub-Division think their group is the privileged group in the country. For example, the Megang group produced a song entitled "Bidjango bi bede ma a nkol ayob" (Messages are coming from the top to the bottom). The song maintained that the Centre and South Provinces combined was in the dominant position in the country.

On the whole, the historical experiences of the two representative zones, the existence of local political organizations such as BICUL, NGUDA, the Meeting of the Bima Chiefs and Ndian Divisional Development Meeting in Ndian Division, and the absence of similar organizations in Mefou Division together with the geographical location of the two representative Sub-Divisions, are factors which account for the differences between themes in the village performances in Mundemba and Mfou Sub-Division.

1. C. (ii). Motives.

The factors that account for the differences of the themes of village theatre in the respective zones also account for the differences of the motives of village theatre in the representative zones. These are namely, the historical experiences of the two representative zones, the geographical location of the two zones and the government attitude towards the respective zones.

The first difference between the motives of theatre in the two respective zones originates from the European administrative legacies. During the period of British administration, the policy of 'indirect rule' implied that the people have to provide their

own basic needs through community labour. As earlier indicated, the people have carried forward the legacy of self-reliance. The idea of creating theatre with the intention of strengthening groups' identities and motivating people to engage in physical projects as a means of developing their respective regions is not new in the English-speaking zone. For example the praise-singer in Fabe and the modern musician in Toko used theatre to call on their respective groups to strengthen their respective groups' identities and to examine the advantages of the creation of roads and markets in their respective regions. According to them, the term 'development' refers to the advantages that accompany the presence of primary schools, roads and the location of markets. In their view, roads and markets would attract traders who will purchase food crops and also sell basic necessities, such as salt, soap, kerosine, clothes, tobacco, books, pens, rulers and pencils. Thus the people would therefore no longer need to trek to Mundemba where there is a market.

Such ideas about the term 'development' refer to the improvements that can be made in the material conditions of life-style of the people. The construction of markets, roads, and so on would enable people to have greater access to trade goods, increase communication, and facilitate the transportation of their own produce.

The term 'development' also refers to the ability of people to think clearly, analytically and creatively about numerous issues. This aspect of the term was apparent in a number of performances. For example, the praise-singer at the Meeting of the Clan's Chiefs succeeded in using theatre to make the chiefs examine the issue of a market from a regional perspective and to overcome their own narrow views about the local advantages which may accrue to specific villages. The Bima and Ngolo performing artists thought of the notion of development in terms of an advancement in the material quality of life as well as an advancement in intellect and critical faculties.

By contrast, during the French administration, the indigenous people were made to look up to the government which provided the people with basic necessities such as roads, primary schools, hospitals, pipe borne water and markets. Thus the people have continued to look up to the government for their basic essentials. It is in this context that the village troupes in the French speaking zone do not produce plays with the intention of persuading people to engage in physical projects. Rather, they

produce theatre with the aim of setting the people to reflect on philosophical issues, engage in positive thinking and consciousness raising in order to change their views on certain issues for the well-being of the entire community.

For example, the Megang group, which represents village performing artists in Mfou Sub-Division, did not produce theatre for the purpose of persuading the people to embark on physical projects. Rather, the intention was to make the plight of the people known to some members of the privileged class, who did not watch plays merely to be entertained, but who wanted to understand the underlying meanings of the performances. If the government administrators who watched the performance understood the deeper meaning of the songs and dances, and the intention of the performers, then they might think of the promises the government had made to the people and perhaps would look after the people better in the future. As is obvious, the Megang group does not produce art for art's sake, the songs have intrinsic value with didactic, moral, and political concerns.

Furthermore, the Megang group did not produce theatre that overtly portrays their grievances about the government. Two factors account for this. Firstly, Cameroon is a multi-ethnic nation and the President of the Republic of Cameroon is a native of the Centre and South Provinces. The characteristics of presidential government mean that the President has the power to make decisions in favour of the people from the South and Centre Provinces irrespective of other people's opinions and protests. For example, a Cameroon writer and political analyst, Ndongko, maintains that the government has not fulfilled the promise of carrying out development equally in all the regions. Ndongko supported his assertion by pointing out that besides the Littoral Province, the Centre and South Provinces combined have received the largest share of government investment (Ndongko 1980: xxxix), thereby making the Centre and South Provinces two of the most well developed provinces in the country.

In this respect, it is understandable that the indigenous people of the Centre and South Provinces do not aggressively portray their grievances, which combined with the grievances of people from other provinces might lead to the President's dethronement. There is a popular proverb in the Keyang (one of the groups in Manyu Division, South West Province) that 'the roof covers a family's problems', meaning that people should

not expose family problems to non-family members. In this respect, the Megang group believes that the people of the Centre and South Provinces constitute a family and Biya, being one of their sons must be protected against outsiders (who in this case are people from other provinces). Considering this fact, the people from the Centre and Southern Provinces protect the President and above all, want him to remain in power regardless of the government's failures, since they benefit materially from his position. By contrast, the people of the South-West, North-West, Littoral, Western and Northern provinces launched a strike a few years ago, protesting against the government which the people believed had caused the economic crisis. But the people of the Centre and South Provinces did not join the others.

The second factor which determined the motives of the performances in the representative zones is the geographical location of each zone. I mentioned above (supra p. 81) that only foot paths lead to Bima villages. The Bimas and Ngoles believe that their region, which shares a boundary with the Republic of Nigeria, is underdeveloped when compared with other divisions in the country. They believe that one of the reasons why their region is backward is because of the lack of roadways. Good communication facilities (such as good roads) ease the movements of people, goods and ideas. When there is no roadway, the people remain prisoners in their land. They cannot exchange ideas and goods, and so remain confined with their own ideologies and believe that their life-style is the best. Village performing artists produce theatre with the intention of encouraging groups to carry out development projects in their respective regions. One of the motives why the modern musician at Toko produced theatre was to encourage the Ngoles to complete a road project in the Ngolo region. Also the women at Fabe enacted a mime with the intention of describing the problems the villagers encounter as a result of the absence of a road link. Village theatre practitioners in Mundemba Sub-Division in the English-speaking zone are committed to their given communities, and they also want tangible reactions from their respective audiences.

In contrast, most of the villages in Mfou Sub-Division have roads, and primary schools which were constructed by the government. Even in villages where there were no schools, the inhabitants believed that the government would eventually build

schools there. They did not produce theatre with the intention of imploring the respective groups to develop their respective regions, as relatively speaking, they were well developed.

Thirdly, the Bima believe that WWF and the government have combined to prevent the people from maximising the resources in the forest. Also, the government officers forces the villagers who did not purchase tax coupons to do so. Local village performers produce theatre with the intention of portraying their own recalcitrant and callous attitude towards a government which seems to be ignorant of the villagers' problems. This was obvious in the performance by the dignitary at Esoki Bima. Also Fabe women produced a mime which described the problems villagers face and why the men could not purchase tax coupons.

In contrast, there is no organization like the WWF in Mfou Sub-Division. Also the government officers did not force the villagers of Mfou Sub-Division to purchase tax coupons. Thus, villagers in Mfou Sub-Division do not produce theatre with the intention of showing callousness towards the government. Instead, the Megang group produced theatre with numerous intentions: to solidify the regional identity of the people of the Centre and South Provinces; to call on the government to carry out its obligations, such as looking after the people, to depict the identity of the poor and their lot, to describe class stratification within the community, to depict national and international issues, and to raise philosophical issues.

Following the themes and motives of the performances, village troupes in Mfou Sub-Division perceive the term development to refer to intellectual objectivity, the ability to be realistic, and to engage in critical analysis and thought. In contrast, village troupes in Mundemba Sub-Division think of the term as denoting a combination of constructive thinking and the realisation of physical projects. Therefore the term 'development' has nuances of meaning in the two communities. It is apparently clear in Mundemba Sub-Division that the village performing artists' perception and application of the term development would help to create physical changes in a relatively underdeveloped region. For example, the location of a market in the Bima region would generate those advantages that accompany the presence of a market. Also, the completion of the road in the Ngolo region would facilitate the movements in and out of

the region. From this point of view, the term development produces positive intellectual and physical changes when it is applied theoretically and practically.

1. C. (iii). Theatrical Devices.

This section looks at the languages employed by the performing artists, and the theatrical language (bodily movements, facial expressions, postures and gestures) used by the performing artists..

The Megang group used the Ewondo language to convey its messages to a mixed audience (an audience which was made up of people from different provinces). As earlier indicated, the use of Ewondo language limited the message of the songs to the indigenous people in the Centre and Southern Provinces. The use of the Ewondo language by the group could be seen as a means of strengthening the identity of that language community of the people in the Centre and South Provinces. Anderson maintained that the introduction of territorial languages was one of the factors that created unity among the people of a given community (Anderson 1990). Given that the French language is accessible only to those who have acquired western education, and that the Megang group represented the majority of the population (who have not acquired a substantial level of western education), the group used the Ewondo language to portray social identity. From this point of view, the Megang group used the Ewondo language to portray two distinct identities. First, the social identity of the uneducated people in Cameroon and second, the regional identity of the people of the Centre and South Provinces.

Also, the performers at Toko in Mundemba Sub-Division used the Oroko language, and thus made their messages accessible only to the Orokos. However, the modern musician translated his songs into standard English for my benefit. By contrast, the Bimas used the Oroko, Pidgin English and English languages. For example, the old man at Fabe used the Oroko language, the pupils at Esoki Bima used Standard English, and the performers at Makango used Standard English, Pidgin English and the Oroko languages. The use of a variety of languages enabled strangers who made up part of the audience to understand the meanings of the songs.

On the whole, the Megang group employed the Ewondo language thereby making the meanings of the songs solely accessible to the indigenous people of the Centre and South Provinces and a few spectators who understood the Ewondo language. The Bimas and Ngolos, however, used a mixture of languages and also translated songs enacted in the Oroko language, thereby making the messages of their performances accessible to every keen spectator.

Turning to the theatrical language employed by the village performing artists in the two representative zones, they used various techniques. Village performing artists were spontaneous performing artists. They demonstrated a natural skill in their performance. Besides the performers' spontaneous skill and their ability to improvise, village performing artists were professional performing artists. For example, in the Bima region, groups of dancers, had been trained to perform certain types of dances such as, the dignitaries' dance and the warriors' dance at Esoki Bima. Furthermore, even the performers who combined western drama and indigenous theatre, such as the women and the old man of Fabe village, were spontaneous and displayed a high level of professional theatrical skill. For example, when the old man of Fabe village entered the arena, he held the attention of the audience with rhetorical questions. The use of his voice, bodily movements and facial expressions together with the interval between the questions portrayed his oratorical and performing skills. The timing of the questions was intentional, for it emphasised and highlighted his points in a way that enabled the people to assimilate his message. Furthermore, the women of Fabe village captivated the attention of the audience with their mime performance. Their bodily movements, facial expressions, and imitating the noise and sounds of actions helped the audience grasp the message. Perhaps if words were employed, the audience might have been less attentive and the response would not have been so positive. The women fully understood that in a culture where women are not allowed to talk on grand occasions, such as at the meeting between the village's dignitaries and the government administrators, the use of words would have violated the established rules and this might have destroyed the point of the performance. Their mime was both culturally relevant and theatrically forceful, enabling their message to be communicated effectively.

Village troupes in Mundemba Sub-Division used explicit language to transmit their messages. For example, the pupils' song at Esoki Bima village was direct. A plea to the government to think of the peasants' children in remote areas as part of the Cameroon population:

We are the pupils of the government school Esoki Bima.
 We are glad to have you in our midst today.
 Welcome, welcome our Sub-Divisional Officer.
 Take our message to our dear government.
 And send improvement to our new school.

In terms of artistic presentation, the Megang group in Mfou Sub-Division in the Francophone zone talked little and used mime. They conveyed much through the use of gestures, posture, bodily movements and through the use of facial expressions. The use of facial expressions and the bodily movement, posture and gesture enabled some spectators to identify with the Megang group which, they asserted, represented the people. The drummers used a variety of traditional musical instruments such as drums, traditional pianos, whistles, enoks (a type of drum made from a tree's trunk with a big hole in the middle which produces a good rhythm) and jakajaka (a type of rattle made from small calabashes which contain gravel, and when shaken produce a melodious sound).

Unlike village performers in Mundemba Sub-Division who used an explicit style to convey their messages, the Megang group conveyed its messages in a delicate manner. The underlying messages of the performances were full of complexities. The group showed its pre-occupation with wit, ingenuity, complex themes, paradox and dialectical arguments. The group used metaphorical language, symbols, contrasts, irony, metonymy, ambiguity and satire to express its messages. This made their messages obscure, and an insensitive audience could not grasp the underlying messages of the songs. This occasion exemplified this as many members of the audience thought the group was merely providing entertainment. The Megang group also used terse expressions and metaphors to convey messages. Oblique messages could only be grasped by sensitive spectators. An example is the song entitled: Bekoe be tari ya medzo (The pigmies have started again):

The pigmies have started again.
 They have surprised us.
 In our secret society.

The group used the symbols of the 'pigmies' and 'lepers' activities to refer to the rich and the poor. Two reasons explain why the Megang group used this device. First, the Megang group originated in the dominant region which benefited from the political situation in the country. But as a group made up of performing artists (the critics, prophets and seers of the society), it wanted to be critical of the socio-economic and political system in the country. Entangled in this dilemma, the Megang group used metaphor, obscure language as a critical weapon. In this way, it did not overtly irritate the government, and also accomplished its duty of criticising the society. Secondly, the group wanted spectators to search for the underlying meanings of the songs, and also give their own interpretations.

The Megang group also used 'poetic licence' (Tracy, 1989: 36 and Cuddon 1979) to mock and criticise the leaders of the country. It was also concerned with analogies between macrocosm and microcosm, rich and poor. Some of the songs fused the activities of the mundane and spiritual worlds, such as is the case with the song entitled Za awu me loe, za a lone ma? (Who is calling for me?):

Who is calling for me?
I am hearing a call.
Who is calling for me?

On the whole, village performers in Mundemba Sub-Division used a variety of languages (Pidgin English, Standard English, and the Oroko language) and a simple style to convey their messages. By contrast, the Megang group in Mfou Sub-Division used the Ewondo language and a delicate style as a means of communication.

1. C. (iv). Audiences' Responses.

The responses of the audiences were determined by four factors - language, theatrical devices, the occasions and places of performances, and the intentions of the performers.

First the Megang group used the Ewondo language as a medium of expression. The audience which watched the performance consisted of immigrants from other provinces in the country who did not understand the Ewondo language. These

members of the audience could not respond to the messages of the songs. In contrast the Bimas used a mixture of languages, Oroko, Pidgin, and Standard English. The mixture of languages enabled spectators to understand the meanings of songs and dialogues and responded immediately. This was obvious in the audience response to the singer's song at Makango village where the administrators responded by refusing to eat the sumptuous food and fine wine the villagers provided.

Second, the Megang group used obscure metaphors and symbols. For example, pigmies and lepers in referring to the privileged and the deprived classes and used the bench and the throne to represent power and authority. In contrast, even when the Bimas and Ngolos used symbols and metaphors, they were not very obscure. The modern musician at NGUDA used 'dead' metaphors (popular metaphors). For instance, he equated the old weak man in the village with the deserted Ngolo region. This was easy to understand. The use of obscure metaphors and symbols made the messages of the Megang group difficult to understand and to respond to them immediately. This seriously affected the response of the audience; but it appeared to be the group's strategy.

Also, the posture, gestures and style enabled the audiences in the both of the representative zones to grasp the messages of some of the performances. For example, the Megang group's seated position, the use of bodily movements, facial expressions enabled the spectators to identify with the group and to assert that the group represented the people. To use one of their own phrases 'La groupe c'est nous'. Also, the Fabe women's facial expressions, bodily movements, the imitation of the sounds and action made by people climbing and descending hills, crossing rivers, walking on a path, enabled the audience to understand the message of the performance, and to respond positively to the performance.

Thirdly, the occasions in which the productions in the respective zones were performed had tremendous effects on the responses of the audiences. The Megang group enacted their performance on the 11th February in the open air, and police officers were there. If the Megang group had used the French language which was understood by the majority of the population and employed an explicit style, many spectators would have still refused to discuss the performance. This was as a

consequence of the fact that the country has features of a police state, and the spectators could not openly reveal what they thought to be the underlying messages of the songs. For example, when I asked some members of the audience about their impressions of the performance, they shook their shoulders and grinned. They did not want to say anything concerning the performances. Some spectators thought that I was a government secret agent so they would not reveal their feelings. Therefore, the spectators who understood the underlying messages of the play protected their interest by remaining mute. The performing artists used poetic licence to criticise, mock, rebuke, and satirise the government, whereas members of the audience did not have poetic licence. The audience knew too well that they would be solely responsible for their own interpretations of the performances, and thus refused to reveal their feelings about the performances.

By contrast, the Bimas and Ngolos performing artists performed in remote areas. Also, the performers and audience were aware of the fact that without a road linking Bima villages and Mundemba, the security officers' desire to convey the recalcitrant performers and spectators to Mundemba was unattainable. They articulated what they liked and when they liked it. They had nothing to fear. For example, at Makango, a singer used a song to rebuke the government visitors. His supporters joined him in chanting the song. The administration was angry but they could not punish the singers because there was no road link between Makango village and Mundemba, and thus the police and gendarme officers could not have conveyed the singers to Mundemba police stations even if they have wanted to.

Fourthly, the motives of the performances in the two representative regions affected the responses of the respective audiences. The Bimas and Ngolos engaged in theatre as a means of motivating the audience to solidify the identity of a group, to engage in physical projects, such as completing a road project or persuading the government to equip a government primary school. The Bimas also produced theatre with the intention of showing a recalcitrant attitude to a government which seemed to be blind to the problems of the Bimas. Because of the above reasons, the Bimas and Ngolos used theatrical language that was understood by the audience, and they readily translated and gave their own underlying meanings to the performances. For example,

at Esoki Bima, the group of dignitaries who performed a dance drama were eager to reveal the underlying meaning of the performance in the presence of the visitors. When I asked some members of the group to tell me the message of the performance, they readily did so, and did so even in the presence of the government administrators. To the performers, it was a great opportunity to make the visitors understand why they performed that particular dance. The reason why this particular group was so bold in the presence of the government administration was because the Bimas believed passionately that their region was the economic victim in the country. They had not benefited from the government, and so they wanted to discuss the underlying meanings of their performances, even in the presence of the government officers. If they could not engage in an open confrontation with the government in political debate, they did this under the protection of discussing issues explicitly raised in the theatre.

In contrast, the Megang group did not use theatre to implore the audience to engage in physical projects or to entreat the government to develop the region. The Megang group was interested in highlighting and elucidating some contemporary problems. Also, the Megang group was appealing to witty, intelligent spectators who understood the contemporary social, economic, political and cultural issues of the community and who were competent in the language of theatre to make sensible interpretations and search for the messages of the songs beyond the surface meanings. Perhaps, these were some of the reasons why the group used a subtle style and the Ewondo language, which prevented spectators from understanding completely the underlying messages of the performances. Spectators who did not understand the Ewondo language, the language of theatre and who were ignorant of the contemporary social, economic, politics and culture of the community did not understand the messages of the performance. The only prominent visible reaction I observed was at the beginning of the performance when some spectators loudly declared that the group represented the people.

On the whole, although the audiences in both regions were ideal spectators (in the sense that each of the audiences had a general knowledge of the social, economic, political and cultural issues in the respective communities), the language, theatrical devices, the occasions and the motives of the performances played a vital role in the

audiences' responses. The audience that watched the Megang group was a silent audience whilst the audiences in the Bima and Ngolo regions were not silent; they articulated their feelings vocally and visibly.

1. C. (v). Functions.

Viewed from a functional perspective, village performing artists in Mundemba Sub-Division in the Anglophone zone used theatre as a means through which they induce audiences to reconsider their preconceived ideas, and thus change audiences' attitudes for the benefit of others. The Bimas and Ngolos also used theatre as a means of making the people develop objective thinking and a sense of critical thinking; but they went beyond this by asking their respective audiences to embark on physical projects. For example, village theatre practitioners in Bima employed theatre and succeeded in changing the views of some members of the audience. A case in point is the praise singer's performance during the Meeting of the Bima chiefs. The performance succeeded in persuading the Bima's chiefs to unite on the idea that a market should be built in any of the Bima villages. Also, the Fabe village women's performance and the old man's performance made the government administration understand the particular problems of the villagers, and this led to an eventual compromise being reached with the people. Furthermore, the performances reminded the respective audiences to re-examine their regions in terms of development priorities.

The Megang group in Mfou Sub-Division employed theatre to elucidate and expose certain blurred issues which were imperceptible to the people. It used songs to remind the government of its obligations to the people, and also to encourage the poor to understand that they have something which the rich envy.

Theatre in both Mundemba and Mfou Sub-Divisions is used to address the government and government officers, whom village performing artists consider to be too remote from the people. For example, the Megang group used theatre to mock, criticise and to appeal to the government to look after the people. Also, the dignitaries' performance at Esoki Bima and the man's song at Makango were used to mock and criticise the government, and the Fabe women and the pupils at Esoki Bima used a

mime and song to appeal to the conscience of the remote government. One of the functions of theatre is therefore similar to the role of ritual. Both are used to address 'superior' beings who are remote in some way but who have an effect on the lives of the community.

The responses of the audiences were generally positive, particularly in Mundemba Sub-Division. I have already shown that through the use of theatre, the Fabe women were able to persuade the administration to change its views towards villagers. In contrast, the audience that watched the Megang group's performance was excited with the artistic aspect, but it seemed that very few observers grasped the messages of the performance, or if they did, they would not say. Thus many spectators only responded by clapping their hands. Nevertheless, some spectators declared that the troupe represented the people.

In a nut-shell, the themes, motives, style (the use of a mixture of languages, bodily language, traditional performing instruments, folk media and local songs and dances) and the audience responses have combined to make theatre a valuable tool for communication in the respective communities - specifically to the people of Mundemba Sub Division. Theatre is therefore used as one of the means of achieving the people's aspirations. It is also used as a means of enlightening controversial issues in the community and also as a means of conveying messages to superiors such as chiefs, government officers as well as to the government.

¹ Out-station allowance is the money an employee claims from the employer when he/she renders services in a different region for a couple of days, weeks or months. For example, when the teachers in Mundemba are requested to correct General Certificate of Education examination papers in Yaounde, the government gives the teachers money to enable them meet their hotel bills and many other expenses.

² Tax coupons are coupons issued to men after they have paid their annual tax.

³ This quotation is extracted from the speech of the President of BICUL during the Bima's entourage.

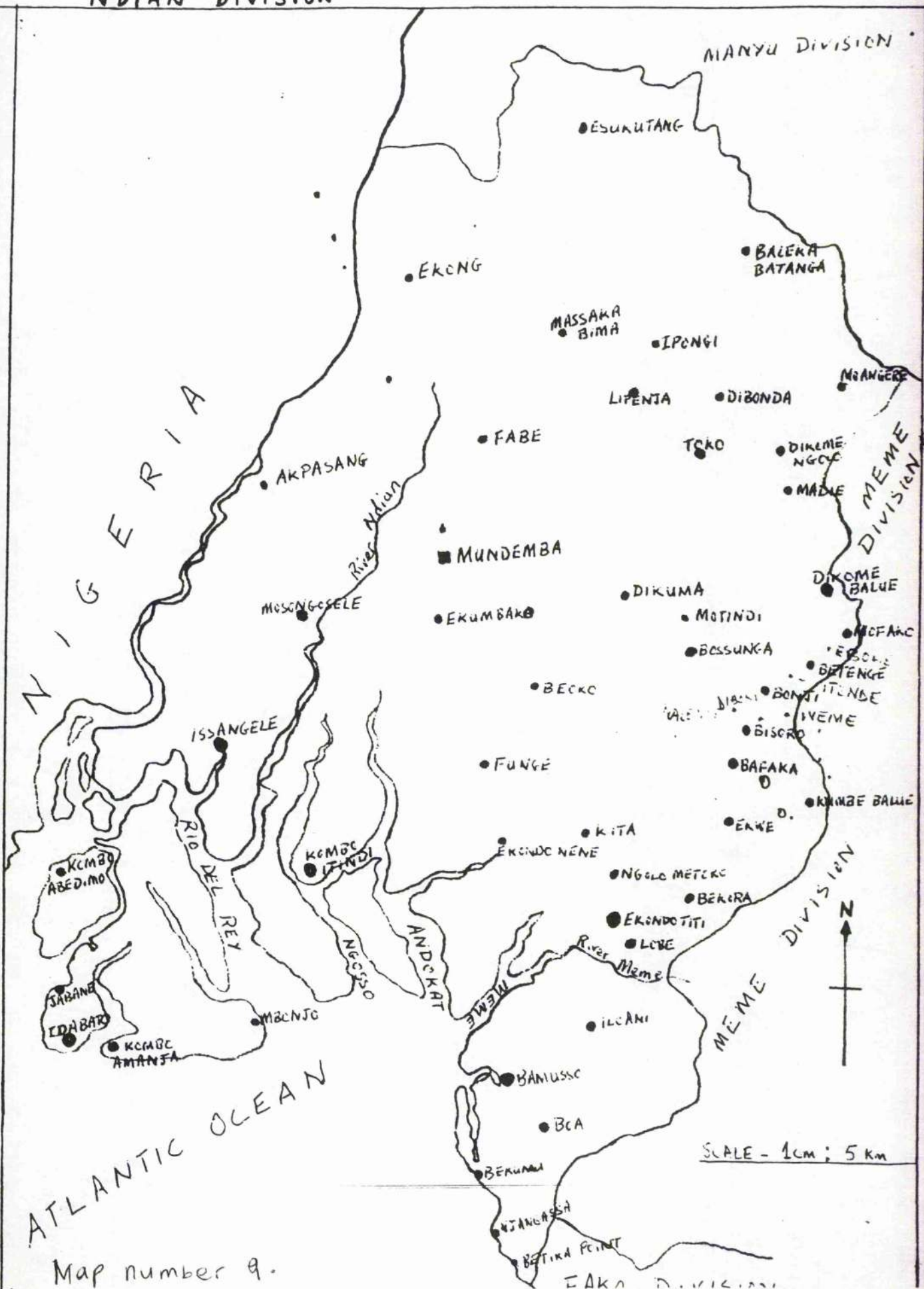
⁴ The extent of the rural exodus in the Ngolo region was less than that which prevailed in the Bima region.

⁵ The Ngolos are similar to the Hausas in the Yoruba land in southern Nigeria who have not only preserved their distinctiveness but also deepened their cultural identity and exclusiveness to the extent that a Hausa broker from the north of Nigeria will entrust his goods and money in the south only to a Hausa broker (Cohen, 1974: 92 & 100).

⁶ The audience response was less positive in the sense that members of the audience did not articulate their deep feelings towards the performances.

INDIAN DIVISION

MANYU DIVISION



SCALE - 1cm : 5 km

Map number 9.

CHAPTER TWO

CITY PERFORMANCES IN THE ANGLOPHONE AND FRANCOPHONE ZONES.

Having chosen the village performances in Mundemba and Mfou Sub-Divisions to represent village performances in the Anglophone and Francophone zones, it follows that the performances of Mundemba and Mfou cities (see maps number eight and nine) should be chosen to represent city performances in the respective Anglophone and Francophone zones. Before I proceed to describe and analyse the performances, I will highlight a few problems confronting the people in the respective cities. This background information would enable us to understand the issues portrayed in the performances.

The road which linked Ndian Division and other divisions was not tarred and also had many pot holes. Due to this fact, Mundemba was practically cut off from the rest of the country. The only inhabitants of Mundemba who occasionally travelled out of Mundemba were the civil servants who went to Yaounde to ensure that their documents were received in the right ministries. Also, civil servants who were not the indigenous people of Mundemba visited their relatives in other divisions. The indigenous people of Mundemba who were not civil servants rarely visited friends and relatives in other divisions. The bad road forced the people of Mundemba to become prisoners of the city. Mundemba has very few recreational facilities and the people of Mundemba do not receive Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV) programmes. Because of the above factors, the inhabitants have resorted to theatre as a means of informing, educating, criticising as well as entertaining themselves and their visitors.

The theatre was produced by different groups. These groups included women, students, indigenous people, community development staff and World Wild Fund (WWF) staff. Students of Government High School at Mundemba were often requested by the government administration, such as the Divisional Officers, to entertain with performing arts important guests such as Ministers, Governors' wives,

provincial delegates. Besides entertaining important guests, students also produced plays with the intention of persuading the government to equip educational institutions. Women produced plays for the purpose of entreating men to re-consider their preconceived notions about women; WWF staff produced plays for the purpose of requesting the indigenous people to conserve the forest; community development staff¹ produced plays with the intention of educating villagers to reduce the number of children in a family; the indigenous people produced plays which portrayed their helplessness in the light of the presence of the WWF and the Pamol Industry in their region. Each group was primarily concerned with protecting its own interests. The approach of the various troupes to theatre was very similar to Boal's ideas. Boal believes that one thing that he will never do again is to go to a group of oppressed people, such as peasants and tell them what they should do, or go to a group of women and say to them: well, to get liberty for women you have to do this. Only the person who is oppressed understands his or her problem and therefore knows how to solve it (Baol 1987: 16). The troupes produced syncretic theatre and used a mixture of languages (Pidgin English, Standard English, and added French and local vernacular phrases and words). The stage property of all the troupes was very simple and included traditional musical instruments, benches, desks and chairs. The costumes were also simple.

Mfou city is just thirty minutes drive from Yaounde. Most civil servants who work in Mfou live in Yaounde. For example, one of the lecturers of Lycée de Mfou, who was also a producer and director of the school troupe, lived in Yaounde and travelled daily to Mfou. He was also an active participant in Café théâtre, a renowned theatre troupe based in Yaounde. He seemed to have relegated the Lycée de Mfou troupe in preference to Café théâtre. Asked why he did not develop the theatre troupe of Lycée de Mfou, his response was that the inhabitants of Mfou prefer to watch theatrical performances and films in Yaounde. Therefore even when they put on plays and charged low entrance fees, very few people watched the performances. Secondly, ceremonials, such as weddings attracted large audiences, especially as free drinks and food were served to the guests. People preferred to attend wedding ceremonies than to watch theatrical performances. Considering Mfou's proximity to Yaounde, and the

frequent wedding ceremonies, the people of Mfou did not engage in producing many theatrical performances. Given the above factors, there were many more theatrical performances in Mundemba city than in Mfou city.

In Mfou city, the theatre was produced by pupils and students, and the theatre dealt specifically with national issues, such as the effects of the national economic recession, the negative effects of the fall in the price of cocoa and coffee and the plight of the unemployed and of women. The plays also dealt with human vices, such as gluttony, avarice, gossip, and the futility of traditional medicine. Pupils and students produced plays with the aim of exposing and illuminating certain issues in the community, as well as educating the community about moral values.

Most of the performances in Mundemba city were watched and filmed from September to December 1990, whereas the performances in Mfou city were watched and filmed in January and February 1991. The chapter is divided into three parts. Part one describes and analyses the theatrical performances in Mundemba city, part two focuses on the performances in Mfou city, and part three is the conclusion.

2. A. THE PERFORMANCES IN MUNDEMBE.

This part is divided into three subsections. The first concentrates on plays which oppose the ideas raised in other plays. These plays are referred to as 'opposition' plays. The second describes women's plays, which are aimed at pleading to the people (particularly to men) to change their attitude for the benefit of women and the community at large, and in this study such plays are called 'entreaty' plays. The third focuses on plays which induce the government to carry out concrete development in schools, and in the context of this study, these plays are labelled 'persuasive' plays².

2. A. (i). Opposition Plays.

The performances discussed in this section include the WWF play, The Farmer and The Hunter. This play advises the indigenous people to engage in the occupation of farming which is lucrative and also provides a stable annual income. The play is also

aimed at discouraging the indigenous people from engaging in the hunting, which is portrayed as unprofitable and yields an unstable annual income. I also examined The Women Centre's Play entitled Emeli, which rejects the ideas raised in the WWF's play. Another play I consider is the Community Development Play, entitled The Sensible Couple which maintains that the number of children in a family determines the quality of life in that particular family, whereas the Christian Women Association's (CWA) play, entitled The Drunkard, holds the opinion that the number of children in a family is irrelevant. For them, what matters is the integrity of the given family. I will begin with an examination of the play The Farmer and The Hunter.

Agoons, the Korup National Park Project educationist, related in an interview (12 September 1990), that he writes short plays on the advantages of forest conservation. In the late 1980s, he produced several plays in order to dissuade the locals from hunting and to encourage them to take up farming. One of his plays is entitled The Farmer and the Hunter.

The play describes the numerous advantages of the farming profession. The dramatist portrays a farmer who uses less energy to accumulate enormous future wealth, unlike a hunter who spends much time and energy chasing animals. The play also depicts a farmer who cultivates cash crops. The revenue from cash crops is used to meet his monetary needs, and food crops to feed his family. Some of the food crop is sold to the burgeoning Mundemba population. The play holds the view that the farmer is sensible and plans for the future, whereas the hunter lives on luck and has no future.

Agoons recruited actors and actresses from the Government High School (GHS) Experimental Theatre Troupe and from the local population to perform the play. The performers used Pidgin English and local dialects. This play was performed in Mundemba city and in villages and camps inside and around the Korup National park. In each of the villages, the troupe added the respective villages' traditional songs, dances and idioms into the play, whereas in the Pamol Industry camps, the troupe added popular songs and dances. Hence the theatrical devices of the play varied from one village to another, and from one camp to another. The purpose was to make the message of the play accessible to the people.

The play began with a prelude. A farmer realised the advantages of conserving the forest:

Farmer We need wood for cooking, and to build houses; to make furniture, pencils and paper. We need wood for our cradle and the coffin for our final rest.[Trees provide us with] food, [such as] fruits, nuts, vegetables and tubers. Fallen dead leaves provide manure for our crops. Roots hold the soil together and prevent rainwater from washing away our crops.

Scene one described the encounter between the farmer and the hunter and the exchange of views:

Hunter What are you doing?

Farmer I 'm nursing seedlings to provide food, firewood, housing needs, medicines for now and for the future.

Hunter What you are doing is dangerous! You can wound yourself in the process!!

Farmer I am practising conservation. I harvest the branches of this tree for firewood. I harvest the leaves to feed my goats. In this way, the tree continues to survive and I can still have firewood and leaves for my goats in the future! I will not have firewood in the future if I cut down the tree!! (The farmer demonstrates). This is how I tap my palm-wine! I do not fell the palm tree. In this way, the palm tree does not die but continues providing me with oil which is good for my food and nuts which I use in making "mayanga"(Kernel oil) which, as you know is good medicine!!

Scene two described the advantages of the farming occupation in contrast to the disadvantages of the hunting profession:

Farmer What do you do to get income?

Hunter I hunt animals! It is very tiring but practical because I find a ready market for my meat. But game guards frighten off my customers! Now, I arrange to meet my customers, two or three kilometres from Mundemba town. When they buy the meat, they put it in clean bags. My

female customers put the meat in bags then cover it up with cocoyams or cassava to give the impression that they are from their farms. This is how we fool the game guards!

Farmer For how long will you continue this hide and seek game with game guards? Why can't you try something else?

Hunter What is it ? I am ready to do anything to have money. But please, don't tell me to plant cocoa or coffee. I spend a lot of money paying porters to carry the cocoa or coffee to Mundemba, so at the end, I have no money from the cocoa!!

Farmer Okay. I shall tell you about BUTTERFLY FARMING. It is strange, I know.

In chapter one, local performing artists and villagers in Fabe and Esoki Bima villages complained bitterly about the problems farmers encounter in the process of transporting cash crops to Mundemba. Here, in this play the hunter is reiterating a similar complaint.

Considering that Agoons was the Korup Project's educationist whose role was to educate the people to conserve the forest, it was not surprising that he should engage in producing plays with the intention of dissuading the local people from hunting. In order to achieve his aim, he used drama as one of the means. It is a generally accepted by performing artists who use theatre as a means of education that, where communication is via auditory and visual senses, a message is fully absorbed. If Agoons' immediate intention of producing the play was to divert the attention of indigenous people from hunting, his ultimate aim was to protect the aims of the Cameroon government and the international political organization (WWF). However, considering that the soil is infertile, it is doubtful to what extent farming as an occupation would generate sufficient revenue. Moreover, the prevailing economic recession, which made it impossible for the government to pay for farmers' cash crops, impelled some farmers to fell their cocoa and coffee trees, as the farmers of Esoki Bima village pointed out.

Furthermore, Mr Alo Alo who was the Project Manager did not help to alleviate the inhabitants' plight. He related in an interview (22 / 10 / 90) that the project

encouraged the locals to embark on farming. According to him the Korup National Park Staff had requested villages inside the Korup National Park to emigrate and create settlements outside the Park. He emphasized that the promoters of the project had allocated funds to equip the local people with agricultural tools. However, prior to these tools being supplied, the locals must leave the park's territory and also contribute 50% of the total cost of the tools. For their part, the locals maintained that they were penniless, and could not contribute. They also argued that they could not leave instantly without tools. What they would like to do was look for suitable sites and cultivate a few acres, for the purpose of ensuring a food supply, prior to emigrating. But in spite of the locals' demands, Korup staff remained adamant. Emigration and a contribution to the cost of tools would precede the supply of tools.

Moreover, the staff selected a few indigenous people to study the diversity of existing agricultural skills, such as the rearing of animals, cultivating fruits, planting tuber crops, and different forms of handicraft. These skills were taught at the Rural Training Centre (RTC) Kumba in Meme Division. The majority of the villagers were elderly people and they could not acquire new skills. Consequently, the people's inability to acquire new skills and the meagre concessions for settlement, together with the staff's stubborn resolution, were posing problems for the objectives of the Korup Park. Although the project intended to encourage the indigenous people to develop new skills and to establish farms which would have enabled them to have stable annual incomes, the project's staff fell short in communicating with the people.

In response to Agoon's play, the teachers and women of the Women's Centre ³ produced a play with the main aim of rejecting Agoon's ideas. The play maintains that if the people were not allowed to hunt and if farming was as fruitless as it seemed, then taking into account the fact that the Korup Project's staff was deaf to the local proposals, they had no alternative other than to violate the rules of the Cameroon Government and WWF. The play was entitled Emeli. The second theme of Emeli (women's plight in the light of illiteracy) is discussed under entreaty plays.

The first scene was performed in a 'forest'. The first scene described a hunter who saw an animal but would not shoot it because of the presence of the forest guard.



Picture Number 9. The hunter in the Women Centre's play, Emeli.



Picture Number 10. The trader in CWF's play comes late to the CWF's meeting.

The hunter was angry with WWF which has brought problems to the indigenous people. In frustration, he asked a series of rhetorical questions:

Papa Emeli Weh! Oh waiti dis Korup people dee mean? See me ma small frotambu wai ah for shotam! Dis Korup man don comot come. Any bush weh one go Korup people dee dai dai. Waiti Korup one make we do? Which Kind suffer dis? Waiti ah go tell dat woman? Korup one sai make we die orna waiti?

Translation

Emeli's father (He is hunting, notices a forest guard and stealthily takes cover (see picture number 9). When the forest guard retires, he pours out his emotions). Oh what does Korup want? I almost shot a young monkey when the game guard appeared. What does Korup staff expect us to do? What type of suffering has Korup brought? They are found in all parts of the forest. What shall I tell my wife?

The hunter returned from the forest and related the events to his wife. He advised the wife to send their daughters to the river to fish. The wife was disappointed, nevertheless, she thanked the Almighty God that the husband had not been arrested and put into prison. She wondered what she would have done with the children. She said that when her husband's hunting expedition was successful, she sold some of the meat, and this enabled her to clothe her children. Now she could not buy rubber slippers. They walked barefoot. She doubted whether the girls would agree to fish because they have been fishing for a couple of months. Nevertheless, she called for the eldest daughter, Emeli, and gave her the message. Emeli related the message to her sisters. But the sisters refused to carry out their parents' instructions. Emeli rebuked them and said they should be grateful to the Almighty God that Korup staff had not prohibited them from fishing. If it did, they would perished.

The fact that this play was produced was already a clear indication that the local people had absorbed the message of Agoon's play and rejected it. The play also proved that the indigenous people were asserting their identity as well as protecting their interest against national and international organizations.

The following example provides a contrast. The Mandara Mountain Area Development Project (in Northern Cameroon) which was sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development in 1976, was aimed at resettling the local people of the region on fertile land where they could engage in productive economic activities, and hence improve their life-style. The President (the late Ahidjo) who came from the region showed a keen interest in the project, since he sought to protect his people's interest. Hoben (the director of the project) clearly points out:

...Islamic polities...were considered 'civilised'. Conversely, the southern forest of the Savannah lands were regarded as tribal backwaters. Indeed, the President and a number of other high officials in the national government at the time of my work were from the north, and the region still enjoys a considerable degree of autonomy compared with other regions (Hoben 1978: 168-194).

For their part, those who promoted the Korup Project showed little interest in the fate of the indigenous people. Thus the local people depicted their fate in various ways, such as for example, in the Women Centre's play Emeli. The people were clearly concerned with their survival, identifying their links with the hunting profession, and not with the protection of the forest. They did not want to stop hunting. Until the staff of Korup Project yielded to the local's demands the project was likely to be frustrated through lack of local support. The local people detested being exploited socially, economically and politically by the Cameroonian Government and WWF.

A second pair of plays deals with the common issues but again from two different perspectives. A play by Community Development staff entitled The Sensible Couple is another play which induced a counter production, this time by Catholic Women Association (CWA) who produced an opposition play entitled The Drunkard. The Sensible Couple was created and produced by the female staff of Community Development. The motive of the play is to urge families to aspire for a high standard of living. The play describes two families with a similar financial resources. One of the couples has four children (three daughters and one son), whereas the other has twelve children (ten daughters and two sons). The couple with four children is able to meet the needs of their children as well as giving their children a good education. But the couple with twelve children cannot afford the basic necessities. Consequently, the husband of

the large family arranges marriage contracts for his daughters before they reach puberty. However most of the marriages are failures, and the girls return to their parents and some bring their children along with them.

The play was primarily performed in Pidgin English. Local songs, dances and proverbs were included. The troupe performed the play in surrounding villages and Pamol Camps, as well as in Mundemba. The intention of the play was to discourage couples from having many children. However, according to Joan (the directress of the play), rural settlers maintained that the villages are under-populated, and so they would not reduce the number of people in a family. They argued that Ndian division is full of natural resources which had not been exploited. The people said they desperately needed health care services, and government officers should establish medical centres, primary schools and other facilities in the villages rather than discouraging the people from having many children. Some rural settlers, indeed, claimed that the government had created a new disease 'Aids' with the intention of dissuading people from having many children. They also maintained that the number of people in a family is an indication of the social, economic and political position of the family, since that family would have many in-laws who would regularly bring gifts to them. For these reasons, the play was not appreciated by most rural settlers. Considering that villagers regard children as assets, and that there was enough land in the villages where people can hunt and cultivate, this was not surprising.

In contrast, the Mundemba audience welcomed the content of the play. Some men argued that it was the women who insisted on having several children. They claimed that there was no benefit in having several children if the family's quality of life was to drop drastically as a direct result. This did not imply that the people of Mundemba did not love children. However, having children was not enough. The parents must be responsible, and capable of providing the basic essentials for the family. Hence the attitude of the inhabitants of Mundemba was different. Even the uneducated urban settlers have started changing their attitudes about large families. This was as a result of economic inflation which had led to an increase in the prices of basic necessities and the costs of education.

The play raised heated debate, but in Mundemba many spectators finally agreed that limiting the number of children was good and that family planning was of real importance in this present age of economic crisis. As was apparent, rural and urban settlers responded differently to the content of the play.

The issues raised in The Sensible Couple, were challenged by the Catholic Women Association (CWA) who produced a play entitled The Drunkard. The play was performed on the 22nd December 1990. The play responded to the message of the earlier Community Development play, which maintained that the number of people in a family determined the quality of life of that family.

The play entitled The Drunkard suggests that a couple which has only two children is not able to bring them up. Consequently, the number of people in a family is irrelevant. What is relevant is the personal integrity of the wife and husband. The second message of the play is to dissuade mothers from abandoning their children, irrespective of the problems they face in their marriage homes. The play portrays the negative aspects of drunkenness, for the problems that arise are due to the alcoholic husband who fails to fulfil his domestic responsibilities. Considering that the Catholic Church is against these human vices, it is not surprising that Catholic Women Association should produce a play which is against birth control, divorce and drunkenness. This play is divided into three scenes.

Scene one began in a tiny kitchen where the wife of a drunkard and her two children (Kongwe and Orume), dressed in old torn clothes, were sitting. They were conversing and also arranging bundles of vegetables to be sold. The woman advised her children to use the revenue from the sales of vegetables wisely since they already understood the family's hardship:

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Mother | Kongwe, when you sell dis jambajamba no take money buy sweet. You know sey na from dis njambajamba wei aa dee get money for buy wuna close, books and for pay school fees. |
| Kongwe | But waiti papa dee do with yee own money. Ee only know how for beat mami and we. |
| Orume | Ee dee buy mimbo. |

- Kongwe When ee don drink drunk na so ee dee smell. Ah hate yee when ee drunk.
- Mother Wuna stop talk. Night dee come. If wuna no go quick wuna no go get chop tomorrow

Translation

- Mother When you sell the vegetables, do not use the money to purchase sweets since you are fully aware of the fact that it is the income from the vegetables that enables me to feed you, to purchase your books and also to pay your tuition.
- Kongwe What does father do with his own money? All he does is beat us.
- Orume He buys alcohol.
- Kongwe When he drinks, he smells. I hate him when he is drunk.
- Mother Stop talking. Night is approaching. If you fail to leave soon, you won't have tomorrow's food.

The second scene was performed in a friend's house. The woman disclosed her problems to two friends. The first friend advised her to borrow money from her njangi group ⁴. This might enable her to establish a business and consequently to look after her children. The second friend argued that if the business failed and she was unable to refund the loan, she might end up in prison. From the second friend's point of view, the marriage was a failure, thus the woman should return to her parents. The first friend intervened and asserted that if she returned to her parents, Kongwe might become a prostitute and Orume might become a thief. The woman listened to the second friend's advice.

The third scene described the problems the children faced. Because their father spent all his money on alcohol, the children starved. In order to gain an income, Kongwe resorted to prostitution and Orume began to steal. Kongwe later became pregnant by her father's friend and Orume was detained in a police cell for having stolen a piece of beef from a restaurant. The friend who advised their mother to take a small loan from the njangi group informed Kongwe about Orume's theft.

This play was a piece of documentary theatre. It suggested that most men evade their domestic responsibilities preferring instead to spend their incomes on drink rather than send their children to school and maintain their families. One of the intentions of the play was to depict the negative consequences on a family of excessive alcohol, and hence persuade men from becoming alcoholic husbands. The play was repeatedly enacted in different environments. Women admired the content of the play, since they were the ones who suffered when men neglected their domestic duties. Considering this, both women and children spectators were pleased with the message of the play. They asserted that it was because men neglected their family responsibilities that offences were usually full even during working hours.

These opposition plays prevented people with different views from engaging into open animosity. The plays acted as mediators between people with polarised opinions. Among the Central Eskimo, duel songs are used by opponents as a means of airing out their grievances as well as settling their conflicts. Eckert and Newmark report that :

The songs aimed to affirm the singer's general good character, and to describe the transgression of the opponent...[However] the purpose of the song is to integrate both parties in a conflict into a normal functioning of the community (Eckert and Newmark 1980: 191- 211).

Second, the plays indicated that audiences did not watch plays merely for entertainment; theatre goes learnt by absorbing the messages of plays. Thirdly, opposition plays created an opportunity for people with different views to test their opinions. For example, after the performances of the The Sensible Couple and The Drunkard, the Community Development and Catholic Women Association which produced and performed the plays listened to the responses of the different audiences. In this respect, the producers learnt whether the opinions raised in their respective plays were valid. Lastly, the plays divided the Mundemba community into debating groups. It has already been explained that after the performances of the plays entitled The Sensible Couple and The Drunkard, the respective audiences were divided into different groups with different opinions. These opposition plays indicated that theatre troupes in Mundemba were determined to induce the audiences in Mundemba to discuss daily controversial issues.

Theatre was also a means of transmitting messages without creating animosity. This was so because theatre was basically meant to entertain. Its didactic and informative roles were secondary. Thus it would be absurd for local performing artists to violently confront each other simply because of the polarizing ideas raised in their respective plays. For example, when Agoons watched the Women Centre play entitled Emeli, he did not quarrel with the women who produced and performed the play. But he could have produced another play reinforcing the ideas he raised in The Farmer and the Hunter. I refer to this practice among local performing artists as theatre politics. This type of politics was different from political theatre. The local performing artists themselves in Mundemba town were aware of the fact that the stage was an aegis to theatre practitioners just as poetry provided poetic licence to poets.

2. A. (ii). Entreaty Plays.

The plays analysed in this section are considered to be 'entreaty' plays because the main motive of the plays is to entreat people to change their negative attitude towards an issue. Such plays include one by the Christian Women Fellowship (CWF) which entreats men to change their negative attitude towards women; another I include here is the second part of Emeli by the Women Centre which encourages women to embark on economic activities, and Nursery School which encourages parents to send their children to nursery school.

Members of Christian Women Fellowship (CWF) ranged from the educated and semi-educated to the non-educated. The members of CWF exchanged ideas and experiences, as well as religious duties. For example, women who could knit and sew shared their knowledge with others. Educated women endeavoured through conversation to lessen the gap between the educated and the non-educated. Another function of CWF was to encourage its members to engage in wage earning activities rather than relying solely on their husbands' income. In sum, the primary function of the organization was for individual women to avoid boredom in their homes, to chat over new gossip in the town, to socialise and to learn new skills.

However, some women noticed with dismay that their husbands detested their membership of the association. In order to convince the husbands that CWF was a useful association, all the members agreed to produce a play on Husbands' Day. This day was set aside by the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon for the purpose of creating an opportunity for the wives to appreciate and love their husbands. The CWF sewed 'uniform' shirts for their husbands, prepared food and drink to be served after the performance and also arranged to display their handiwork on the occasion.

Having agreed to produce a play, the women chose a Bible story - the story of the sower in the field. Some seeds fell on the open ground, and thus were devoured by birds. Others seeds fell on rocks, and because of the lack of soil, they withered. Some seeds fell on thorns and the thorns hindered their growth. Other seeds fell on fertile soil, and so produced good fruits. Although the plot was based on a Bible story, it was used to reflect the views of the different groups of men towards the activities of CWF (some men allowed their women to join CWF, others were indifferent as to whether their wives were members of the organisation, whilst others prevented their wives from joining CWF), and women's helplessness in the light of some men preventing them from joining the CWF. Having decided on the plot of the play, the women divided the story into three scenes.

The first scene describes a woman who attends CWF meeting. While in the meeting the atheistic husband waits impatiently for her return. When she enters the house, he beats her with a long stick, especially since he notices that she is humming a Christian song. This scene reflects the seeds which were devoured by birds as they fell on the open ground. The second scene centres around the seeds which fell on rocky soil, since it describes a member of CWF who loves the activities of the association. However, because the husband has abandoned his domestic responsibility to the wife, she becomes a trader in order to look after her children. She goes to the markets to sell her goods and rushes to CWF meetings only to find that other members have dispersed. The third scene centres around the seeds that fell on fertile soil. The scene describes a woman who convinces her impious husband to denounce magic and join the Christian religion.

Since the CWF was a large group and there were few parts in the play, in order that all the members of CWF took part, the women included a church scene, which served as a prologue. After the women built the plot and created the scenes, they allocated the roles to various individuals and improvised the play. Each woman was given a part which related to her daily experiences. For example, the woman who played the role of a trader was a trader in real life, and the woman who played the role of the pastor was an elder in the church. Actresses who played the role of husbands borrowed their husbands' shirts, trousers, shoes and ties. The women ensured that the costumes corresponded to the respective parts they played. The women added local flavour such as slang terms which were popular among women and local hymns during the improvisation. These slang expressions included phrases such 'manpikin dem' (men!), 'dis man' (my husband).

Having improvised and rehearsed the play, the women decorated the Presbyterian Church where it was to be performed on 19 September 1990. They also displayed their handiwork on a table standing almost at the centre of the church. The husbands who dressed in their 'home made uniforms', sat in one section of the church. Friends were also invited to watch the play. With children who wanted to see their mothers on stage, with the women's husbands, other friends and the Christians, the Church became over crowded. Nevertheless, an arena was created for the performance.

Before the church service commenced, the leader of the troupe announced that the CWF members had a short play to present to the congregation, particularly for the benefit of their husbands. Once the formal church service was over, the congregation remained attentive, looking forward to see the women on stage. CWF members had performed religious plays before. But they had never invited their husbands and friends to watch. This play was therefore special.

Once the audience was silent, the leader of the troupe narrated the plot of the play. Each scene was preceded by a prologue and ended with an epilogue. Perhaps the intention was to ensure that the audience assimilated the message of the play. The introduction was closely followed by the prologue (the church scene), which was followed by the first scene.

A woman returned from a CWF meeting in a state of spiritual tranquillity, and hummed a Christian song. However, as she entered the house, the furious husband enquired whether she came to Mundemba with the whole intention of attending CWF. He used a big stick to hit her. As a result, the woman was forced to denounce CWF:

Husband If I am the one who brought you from the village to Mundemba dare you attend the CWF's meeting again. (Goes out)

Wife (Sobs). It is my husband who brought me to Mundemba. I will stop attending CWF's meetings. I want to secure my marriage.

These men in Mundemba, who considered the home to be the right place for women, prevented the women from engaging in out-doors activities. These attitudes were little different from those in the media which continued to portray the home as the rightful place for women (See Viezz 1986: 117 - 125).

In the second scene, a CWF member was returning from the market with her basket on her head. On her way to the CWF meeting, she met other members returning from the meeting. The latter informed the former that the meeting was over (see picture number 10). The woman sighed and also blamed it on her irresponsible husband whose neglect of his family responsibility had forced her to go out and work.

The third scene began with a CWF member returning from a CWF meeting. She joined her husband in the drawing room and informed him about Jesus. Initially, the man was uninterested. However, the woman succeeded in convincing him to denounce traditional religion and to accept Jesus. He was finally led to the church by his wife and two children. While in the church, members of the congregation were pleased, and they enacted a special service on his account. The play ended with members of CWF singing Christian songs.

The women who acted the roles of children behaved very much like children. This fascinated the boys and girls in the audience, and they were excited to see their mothers behaving in this way. The children were also interested in the actresses' grotesque costumes (men's clothes, shoes, ties, caps and so on) whilst most men, especially the guests, were more interested in the message of the play. Other spectators were interested in the manner in which certain actresses performed. The entire audience was satisfied with the CWF performance.

After the performance, the Assistant Sub-Divisional Officer of Mundemba Sub-Division made a brilliant speech. He urged those men who prohibit their wives from joining CWF to endeavour to understand the activities of the association. He pointed to the exhibitions on the table to indicate the good work the fellowship performed. He compared husbands who did not allow their wives to join CWF with the husband portrayed in the first scene of the play. He asked the men if they approved of the man's behaviour. The entire audience responded as one, that the man's behaviour was not compatible with modern behaviour. This was despite the fact that the audience consisted of men who had refused to let their wives join CWF. Even these men joined in the public denunciation of such male attitudes, especially after they saw the women's handiwork.

The Commissioner of Police congratulated the women for putting forward their grievances in a subtle manner rather than quarrelling with their husbands. He encouraged women to use theatre as a means of appealing to men's consciences, but not to use it as weapon to abuse men. The men unanimously agreed to donate money to enable the women to meet some of their expenses, and that part of the money should be used to purchase materials for their handiwork. The men also bought the items which were displayed, at high prices, on the centre table. After the donation and the sales of items, the audience was entertained with food and drinks.

The women of Mundemba have also realised that the major problem that some of them faced was financial dependency on their men. Because of their dependency, they have perpetuated the mythical ideology of female subordination. They have realized that they could be very instrumental in challenging and transforming this ideology. In order to achieve their ambition, they have turned to theatre as one of the means through which they could achieve their aim.

It was indicated in the first chapter that in other societies women use devices such as rituals, state of ecstasy, spirit possession and cults as mediums through which they impel men to pay attention to women, respect women and also recognize women's power (See Ardener 1972: 135 - 159 and Lewis 1975: 32). Jagger also wrote that women have used different forms, such as through illness, drug and alcohol addiction, and even madness to resist subordination and to escape from their socially prescribed

roles (Jagger 1983: 3). In Mundemba CWF members used theatre as a means of entreating men to allow women's social groups to function unhindered. They wanted men to recognise women's potentials, and thus to treat them like responsible human beings. Humm in her Dictionary of Feminist Theory maintains that the concept of equality is based on the idea that no individual should be less equal in opportunity or in human rights than any other (Humm 1989: 63 - 64). Perhaps the women in Mundemba wanted the men to realise that the right and left hands are equally useful to every human being. Therefore instead of considering the relationship between men and women being as asymmetrical, men should believe in symmetry.

I earlier indicated that the second part of Emeli, the play by the Women Centre, is intended to persuade women to engage in economic activities and to discourage them from abandoning their domestic duties in spite of the burden. This part of the play depicts Emeli, the poor innocent girl married to a Senior Divisional Officer, who as a consequence of the excitement about her new life neglects her domestic responsibilities. It portrays the consequences of her negligence and her eventual self discovery.

Emeli notices that she is almost losing her husband, so she decides to carry out her domestic functions, and also to change her personality by acquiring western education. The prime intention of this part is clear: it is to inform semi-literate housewives that it is never too late to learn and that every one has at least two chances should they fail the first time. Semi-literate women should be courageous enough to try a second or even a third time in their aim of improving themselves.

This part of the play is divided into three scenes. The first scene describes Emeli in the midst of excitement in her new home. The second scene depicts a change of events, and the third scene centres around her self-discovery and the manner in which she sets out to rectify her mistakes.

This part of the performance began with Emeli as she sat comfortably on a sofa. She had recently given birth to a son. She had domestic servants who did the daily chores. She was excited and contented with her new style of life. She reflected and soliloquized over her good fortune:

Emeli Weh na Emeli dis wai ee don be na dio ye woman? Emeli wai ee be dee waka
empty foot for ye papa yee house. Na yee dis wai na people de dee work for

yee. Na so ma masa ee like me. Plus wai aa don born yee man pikin. Weh Emeli! Who go go call ma mami and ma sista dem make dey come see me how wai aa dee enjoy for dis man yee house. Now aa no dee catch fish again. Aa nodi even go for market. Aa no dee do any thing. Small time, aa go carry another belle. Dis woman for dis town deh go talk tire. Deh go seh Dio ye woman don get another belle na na so weh pikin never waka. Na their problem? Na me aa dee carry the pikin? Money dey. Washerman ee dey, cook ee dey, man wai dee carry pikin ee dey, watchman ee dey. Waiti be ma problem?

Translation

Emeli Is it Emeli who has become the Divisional Officer's wife? Emeli who walked barefoot in her father's house. Now people serve her. My husband loves me very much, especially as I have delivered a son. Who will bring my parents, brother and sisters to come and see how Emeli is enjoying her husband's house. I have stopped going to the stream to fish. Very soon I will become pregnant again. The women will gossip until they will become tired. They will say the Divisional Officer's wife is pregnant when the other child has not started walking. Is it their problem? It is me who carries the baby in my womb. There is money. I have many domestic servants (launderer, driver, a cook, baby-sitter and a night watch - man). Where is the problem? (In the midst of excitement she gazes steadily at the ceiling).

The second scene depicted a change of events. Having given birth to many sons, Emeli became very recalcitrant. According to her, having children was enough to secure a marriage. Thus she stopped supervising her domestic servants. The house was in disorder, the children were dirty and her appearance irritated the husband who eventually found a mistress. Emeli eventually discovered her faults, and she set out to resume the duties of a responsible housewife. She also remembered that she had a First School Leaving Certificate. She decided to attend the evening classes which prepared students for the General Certificate of Education (GCE) examination. She believed that she might pass the GCE examination and eventually be like her husband's educated 'working class'⁵ mistress. Her husband would, then, no longer be able to call her an illiterate woman from the village.

In scene three, the results of the GCE Ordinary Level have been published and Emeli has passed in five papers. She was jubilant over her success. She also made plans for her future:

Emeli Huum! ⁶ Emeli has passed the GCE. Now I will become a civil servant. I will dress like working class women. I will no longer be considered a primitive girl from the village. My husband will pay attention to me especially as I have started tidying up the children and the house. My husband will rejoice over my success. Oh it is wonderful.

Emeli initially theorized her concept of development, then, put it into practice. She understood that through the acquisition of western education, she would widen her horizons and improve on her life-style. Thus she enrolled in evening classes and sat for the GCE Ordinary Level Examination.

The audience reacted positively to this part of the play. Some men overtly accepted that they abandoned their homes because of the neglect of domestic duties by their wives. They claimed that some women could not organise their homes, and thus men were bound to keep clean mistresses. According to them, the most important lesson in this part of the play was to encourage cleanliness. For their part, some women spectators maintained that they would like to attend evening classes if this was possible in Mundemba. Considering the fact that the women at the Women Centre were drop outs from primary, secondary and high schools ⁷, it was not surprising that they should produce a play to encourage other drop outs to acquire western education and other economic skills. The women were in effect requesting other drop outs to emulate their examples, and thus improve on their respective personal life-styles.

The third entreaty play was produced by the pupils and teachers of the nursery school. They organised a Nativity play which the staff directed and the parents provided costumes for their children. In order that every child in the school should participate in the performance, the plot of the play covered the period from the annunciation of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ to when Joseph and his family were advised by Angel Gabriel to flee to Egypt. Children's songs and dances were added to the performance. The rehearsals took several weeks since the children usually forgot

their parts and some actors forgot to wait for their turns. Having produced the play, the nursery school staff invited parents to watch the play.

The play was performed at the Women Centre hall on 20th December 1990. The play started with songs and dances. Each scene had a prologue and an epilogue, and this was performed by one of the female teachers in the school. The play ended with a song in which the pupils used the French language and a few Pidgin English words. Here is the song:

Tout le monde est déjà là.

Fait un peu de nyanga (pride).

Comme ça.

The fact that the play ended with this song implied that the school was training bilingual citizens who would fit into Cameroon culture. Many English-speaking Cameroonians who are also civil servants do not understand the French language, so they encounter difficulties when they visit ministries in Yaounde. If the young generation can understand both English and French (the two official languages) then genuine reunification between the two Cameroons might eventually be realised.

During the performance, the parents whose children were in this school smiled radiantly and their satisfaction could be deduced from the joy and the pride on their faces, and in their intonations. The parent whose two children acted the major roles (Joseph and Mary) proudly and ironically said she and the husband had spent many hours helping the children to memorise their roles, but even then the children made several errors. Some members of the audience said the performance was brilliant, considering that it was acted by children between the ages of three and four. I eventually realised that the woman wanted other members of the audience, who did not know the parents of each child, to realise that she was the parent of the two main characters in the play. Perhaps, her actions might act as a stimulant to other parents to help their children if they were given roles in subsequent performances. Parents whose children acted were very excited, and those whose children were not in the school envied those whose children were in this school.

The audience was pleased with the performance. After the play, the Divisional Inspector of Primary and Secondary Education congratulated the staff and parents

whose efforts immensely contributed to the realisation of the play. He maintained that in their days there had been no nursery schools. But now, there were many nursery schools in the country, and even in the forgotten region of Mundemba. He enumerated the advantages of the school: it provided a good foundation for higher education and helped children to learn new games and to share with others. He appealed to parents whose children were not in the school to send their children to nursery school. However, he drew attention to the fact that it was a responsibility to send children to nursery school since it involved taking the child to school at 7 30 a. m. as well as collecting the child from school at 12 p. m. Therefore those who were not ready to accept such a responsibility should not send their children to nursery school. Parents also congratulated the staff. According to the headmistress of the nursery school (who was also the Women CPDM Sub-section President of Mundemba Sub-Division), the intention was to motivate parents to send their children to nursery. The staff's intention was to evoke the notion that sending children to the nursery was a matter of necessity. Some parents whose children were not in nursery school, and who envied those whose children were in the school, did secure admission for their own children for the 1991 / 92 academic year. The positive response of the audience to this play was as a consequence of the fact that there was a high degree of competition among parents who were civil servants. Even the poor parents who watched the play also intended to send their children to nursery school.

Judging from the audience response to all the entreaty plays, they were successful. The CWF's play and the Women Centre's Play conformed to Boal's idea that the oppressed groups should fight against domination. Faced with the realities of gender relations, the women of Mundemba did not sit down waiting for men to liberate them. They were active in achieving this themselves. Now they were beginning to take development initiatives into their own hands. Furthermore, during the Ndian Divisional Meeting of December 1990, the Senior-Divisional Officer (Mr Nzegge) called on indigenous politicians to unite for the purpose of promoting development in the Ndian Division:

There is a need for the political leaders to sink their differences and come together to build...a prosperous Ndian Division... To be together is a must if we have to mobilise all the active

forces of Ndian Division for its development. There is a need for calm political climate which is necessary for a united and concerted effort in our fight against the malaise of the economic crisis...The future of Ndian Division is bright since the Division has lot of economic potentials (human and natural resources) which have not been exploited. Thus the government administration is appealing for a change of heart and reconciliation of attitude from the elites of Ndian Division.

This call was not restricted to politicians. It was a plea to all the different groups in the community to develop their potential. The different classes of women in Mundemba were putting Boal's and the Senior-Divisional Officer's advice into practice. In order to do this, they have resorted to theatre as one of the means of fighting for liberation and encouraging women to develop their economic potential.

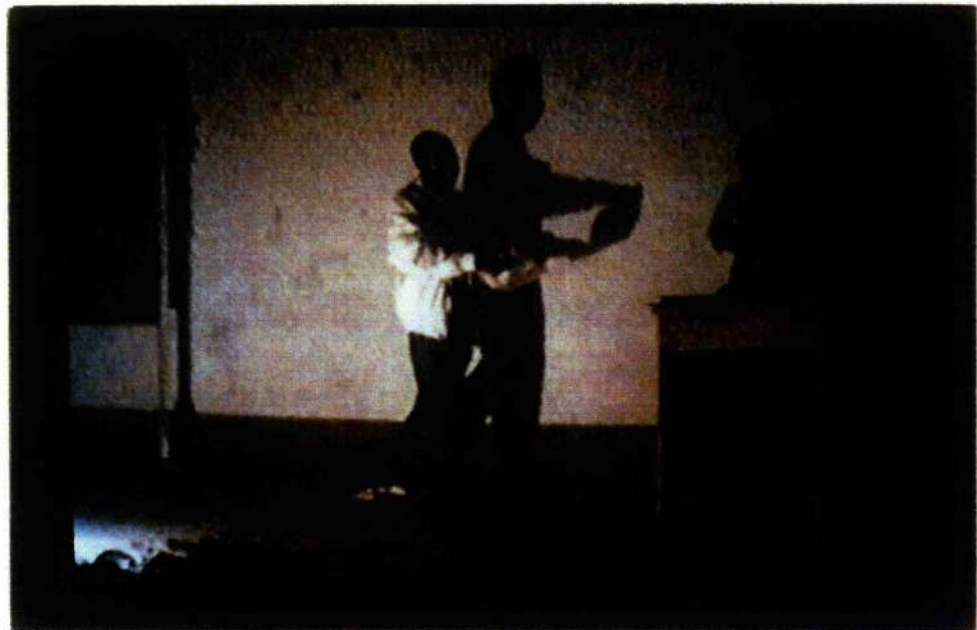
2. A. (iii). Persuasive Plays.

The performances discussed in this section were intended to persuade the government to carry out concrete development projects in Mundemba and in schools, such as tarring the road from Kumba to Mundemba, equipping hospitals and schools as well as building recreational facilities. These performances were produced and performed by Mundemba Government High School Experimental Theatre Troupe and the students of Mundemba Government Technical High School. The performances were watched by all the different sectors of society, such as the people, the middle class including the Senior-Divisional Officer and the Delegate of Education for the South West Province.

It was stated at the beginning of the chapter that in the absence of other recreational facilities in Mundemba, the town's inhabitants had resorted to watching plays for entertainment and leisure. The Government High School and the Government Technical High School were constantly requested by the Senior-Divisional Officer to entertain important guests (Ministers, Provincial Governor, Delegates and Directors) with theatrical performances. However, besides fulfilling the SDO's request, school troupes also used theatre as a medium through which they could encourage moral uprightness and promote socio-economic and political development in the region. These students were not different from the Travelling Theatre in Malawi described by Kamlongera, which was invited by the government to entertain the people of



Picture Number 11. GTHS' musical theatre on 24th December 1990.



Picture Number 12. GHS Mundemba Students' play on 24th December 1990



Picture Number 13. The Senior-Divisional Officer makes a speech after the GHS' & GTHS' theatrical performances.

Mbalachanda. In addition to fulfilling the government's request, the troupe became conscious of problems in Mbalachanda. As a result, the troupe joined with the extension workers, such as agriculturists, and educationists to hold a workshop on theatre for development. From the workshop, plays emerged based on the problems of the inhabitants of the locality (Kamlongera 1981- 82: 207-222).

During the installation of the principals of Government High School Mundemba (GHS), and of Government Technical College Mundemba (GTC), by the Delegate of Education for the South West Province on 24th November 1990, students of the respective schools produced and performed different forms of theatrical entertainments. GTC was the first to appear with a musical theatre (see picture number 11). This performance called on the government to protect the interest of Cameroonians, irrespective of their regions of origin:

Cameroonians, Cameroonians.
 we are in our fathers' land.
 We are the products of the New Deal.
 We are the ones to maintain the peace in this country.
 The poor and the rich in our country.
 Should enjoy the fruits of their labour.
 Along, along Mr President.
 May the New Deal of Cameroon.
 Bring peace and prosperity.
 To all Cameroonians.

The meaning of this song was contrary to the lyrics. The students were using irony to prick the conscience of the President and his government. President Biya had called on the young to demonstrate a high sense of moral rectitude so that the country could be developed:

Unless the young people effectively become an essential driving [for the development of Cameroon] force. For who, indeed, more than the youths who are less exposed to the ineptitudes of the past and less prone to selfishness, who are more responsible to the calls of the future and to the generosity - who, more than they, can more effectively promote the profound changes in attitude, behaviour and structures which this policy [The New Deal; rigour, moralization and democracization] implies. This means that through your constructive criticism, sense of analysis, quest for perfection, sense of duty, in short, your creative dynamism, you will transform Cameroon, our beautiful country into a real and great model of development. It also means that you have to display a sense of rectitude, honesty and intellectual probity so that our society can be built on more propitious foundations (Biya quoted in Sam-Kubam and Ngwa-Nyamboli, 1988: 364 - 5).

The students believed that this call was genuinely valid theoretically but practically it was questionable. Thus they used theatre to call on the President to ensure that his good policies were implemented. The students understood that the President's policies were worthless if they were not implemented. Already many Cameroonians believed that nepotism prevailed at all levels in the country. They used various forms of media to portray the evils of the practice as well as challenging and ridiculing the government, which called for moral uprightness.

In a recent article by Mbawa, the writer draws nation's attention to the fact that a handful of Cameroonians were promoted to certain positions simply because of their relationship to the President:

Assoumou looked pensive and lacked the charm and radiance that bright managers display before television cameras. In a conceited effort typical of people like him, he replied to one of his interviewers that the act of selling petrol was very complicated for the common man to understand. One would doubt silently what public exams Assoumou wrote (safe for tribal links) to overcome the complex that he thinks many Cameroonians are suffering which bars them from understanding the art of selling petrol (Mbawa March 1991: 21-28).

Kofele-Kale, the historian also holds a similar view to Mbawa (see Kofele-Kale, 1981). He argues that unless Cameroonians adapt the procedure that puts the right person into the right job, unless considerations of ethnic origin are put aside, Cameroon might not recover from the economic crisis.

In this performance it can be seen that students who have no political power have used theatre as a tool through which they can join historians such as Kofele-Kale and Mbawa in reminding the government of its role to the entire population, and not merely to those related to the President.

The next performance was by G.H.S. Mundemba Experimental Theatre Troupe. The play describes indiscipline in the institution, and the problems that students face, such as the difficulties of studying in an institution without electricity, pipe borne water, toilets, a canteen and proper library facilities. The play also refers to the problems associated with the absence good roadlinks from Kumba to Mundemba, with shortages of food and with the poor accommodation facilities in Mundemba

The play was directed by Kome, a lecturer at the school and the director of GHS Mundemba Experimental Theatre Troupe. The troupe created the plot, held the rehearsals and performed the play. As earlier mentioned, GHS Experimental Theatre Troupe was producing plays for the benefit of Mundemba's population. However, although the troupe had produced and performed several plays in the past, this particular play was the first to portray the problems of the institution itself. The creation of a play which depicted the daily experiences of their institution posed few problems especially as the troupe was familiar with theatrical routine. The actors and actresses converted their personal clothing into costumes, and they also brought their own food to rehearsals, thus minimizing the costs of production.

The play is divided into three scenes. The first scene deals with the indiscipline which prevails at all levels in the school. The students are rude to the teachers. When the teacher demands that Wase, the student, should sit like a lady, she retorts by arguing that it is school policy to have short skirts. The scene reveals the fact that civil servants have taken government employment for granted, they abscond or neglect their duties since their appointments cannot be terminated. The perpetual poor results of the school are caused by the absence of discipline in the entire institution. Scene two ridicules embezzlers (politicians and businessmen) of the country's financial resources. The third scene highlights the problems some students face when they live with family relatives.

The first scene was enacted in the classroom (see picture number 12). This is an extract from the scene:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Teacher | (He notices a female student whose posture irritates him. He turns sharply to the board and adds) Wase, please sit like a lady. |
| Wase | Wase please sit like a lady, I am not responsible for the tight mini skirts. |
| Teacher | We shall continue with this lecture in the next class.(He walks out of the class while the students wait for the next lecturer who never turns up. Instead of reading silently, they create a disturbance. The noise attracts the Discipline Master's attention who rushes to the class) |
| D.M | What subject do you have and where is the teacher? |

Epie We are supposed to have geography, but the teacher travelled last night to Kumba and may only be back on Monday since it is already Thursday.

Scene two was performed outside the classroom. The scene was centred on a conversation between the two girls Bih and Wase. Wase imparted information relating to the problems students faced and the roots of the problems in the institution, which included embezzlement, greediness and avarice:

Wase (She notices Bih's long pleated skirt). Hai, (taking hold of the skirt). What do you think you are wearing? Are you attending a party? Just wait for the D.M. to set eyes on you! He will not only shout and block your ear-drums, he will use his scissors to bring this long skirt of yours to knee level.

Bih I do not understand.

Wase You will understand when you will receive a money order and you cannot cash it because there is no money in the Post-Office. You will understand when you cannot get to Ekondo-Titi because the road is too bad and the fare is raised to one thousand five hundred frs. You will understand when you realize that three fingers of plantains cost two hundred francs, and meat is a luxury. You will understand when you have to play hide and seek with your landlord. You will understand when you realize that there are no taxis in town. Then you will understand and say thank you Mr Discipline Master for insisting on tight mini skirts. You will understand then (shaking her head).

Bih What a school! What a school! You make me shake with fear. Please let's go to the auditorium, I wish to sit down.

Wase (Laughs) Ha ha ha ha! Did you say auditorium? I am sorry, I did not take you round the school. All we have here are congested classrooms, a ridiculous staff room where teachers sit on benches like students. A funny structure called an administrative block and that area over there (pointing to the area) which has been bulldozed. That is where the auditorium was, is, shall and never will be built.

Bih Is it because there is no money to construct the auditorium? Well I am sorry for asking that silly question. Everyone knows the effects of economic crisis.

- Wase Economic crisis? Economic crisis indeed!. Each student pays five thousand francs every year as the Parents Teachers Association (P.T.A.) levy. The Almighty alone knows what happens with the money. Last year the P.T.A. budgeted one million frs for science equipment, the money has been spent but the laboratory has not changed.
- Bih How do science students cope with the poorly equipped laboratory? I mean how do they cope with such a poorly equipped laboratory? Do they make good grades?
- Wase (Astonished). Make good grades! Those who manage two Es should count themselves not intelligent but lucky. Besides, does the school library reflect the G.C.E. syllabuses?
- Bih What a school! What a school! You make me sick. I do not mean to be rude, please could you show me the toilet?
- Wase (More surprised). I better tell you what does not exist so that you stop asking embarrassing questions. There is no good toilet, no pipe borne water, no electricity, no dispensary, no school bus, no canteen. This makes me laugh. You need to see how high school students fight over achomo [a local cake] and beans! It is ridiculous. If there was a canteen, the high school students will respectfully have a snack there. Having explained, my dear, always empty your bowels and bladder before coming to school. If you have an upset stomach, please be a good girl and stay at home.

Besides other factors, the play was a political satire, criticising the politicians and businessmen who embezzled the country's funds. The classrooms were congested, the laboratory was poorly equipped, there was no toilet, no pipe borne water nor electricity facilities, and so on, despite the fact that students have paid a PTA levy of five thousand Cameroon francs.

Furthermore, the play drew attention to the untarred roads in the region, notwithstanding the substantial profits which Pamol industry collected from the region⁸. Moreover the industry used trucks to transport palm nuts from Mundemba to Lobe where the oil mill was located as well as transporting palm oil from Lobe to other divisions and provinces. The heavy trucks created additional pot-holes on the roads.

Recently the industry in collaboration with the government issued a proclamation of an intention to wind up the Pamol Industry. However, the industry still nurtured seedlings, planted young palm trees and added acres to the existing ones. Therefore the extent to which the industry was to be wound up was questionable. In this respect, the industry and the government engaged in politics as a means of deceiving the indigenous people and the inhabitants of Ndian Division. Given the circumstances, it was not surprising that the students' play should draw the government's and the Pamol Industry staff's attention to the problems of inadequate road links in the area.

The last scene highlights the problems some students face when they live with their relatives. Since there were no secondary schools in the rural areas, most people in the villages sent their children to live with relatives in Mundemba where there are secondary schools. Children from villages are considered stupid and foolish by those in Mundemba:

Bih ...Do you live alone? Where are your parents?

Wase They are in the village. I used to live with my uncle. But the wife! My God!

She said I was primitive, and that I could not use the flushing toilet. I did all the chores, but the annoying thing was that she never gave me sufficient food, nor did she allow me to read for as long as I wanted. She would switch off the lights at 9 p.m. even during the exams.

Because of the problems students face when they live with relatives, most of the female students rent individual sitting rooms. Considering that their parents can not afford the expenses (rents, food, clothing, books and so on), some of them resort to having several lovers. For example, when Bih marvels at why the school should insist on tight mini skirts, Wase argues that when Bih realises the cost of food and transport and starts playing hide and seek with her landlord, then she will eventually be grateful to the administration, since the tight mini skirts attract men.

The intention of this episode was to make urban settlers aware of their contribution to the moral decadence in the society. Knowing this, they might change their attitude towards relatives from rural areas. Secondly, the scene was also aimed at inducing the administration to build dormitories for students, particularly for female students, and to change the length of girls' skirts.

It was evident from the issues portrayed that the Students' play raised a combination of political, economic, social and moral issues. The intention was to highlight issues that were otherwise blurred. The play was aimed at persuading politicians, economists, teachers, the school administration and the students' relatives to change their attitudes and to make life more pleasant for students. It was only when an individual became aware of his faults that he could change his attitude, and thus effect actual social change. After the performance the Provincial Delegate accused the troupe of portraying false information, but the audience contradicted his assertions by jeering at him. It was no surprise, however, that he felt embarrassed by the content of the play, considering the fact that besides being an administrator he was also a politician, and the play overtly attacked politicians. In this particular case, theatre had the power to ridicule politicians even in their presence. One of the intentions of this play was indeed to ridicule the Provincial Delegate of National education who was to install principals in schools which were not equipped.

The Senior-Divisional Officer made a brilliant remark. He asserted that having become aware of the problems of the school, the government would eradicate most of them (see picture number 13). His promise was honoured when in December 1990 electricity, and pipe borne water were installed. Thus the play had positive consequences. The Senior-Divisional Officer and the GHS school administration responded positively to this play due to the fact that the respective administrators wanted to protect their posts.

2. B. THE PERFORMANCES IN MFOU

The plays discussed in this section came from the French-speaking zone and dealt primarily with the effects of the economic crisis - such as unemployment. Secondly they dealt with the lot of women, moral decadence, and avarice. The performances in Mfou city were watched and filmed between 23rd January 1991 and 5th February 1991 during the preparatory activities for the National Youth Day on 11th February. This day is a national holiday in the country to celebrate the Youth activities and their initiatives, and also encourage them to aspire to be responsible national citizens in the future. The National Youth Day provides an opportunity for competition in which traditional dances, ballets, recitation and drama are presented.

My intention was to film the performances on the 11th February, but two factors prevented me from doing so. First, I had applied for a permit from the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, to enable me to film theatrical performances in the Centre Province. The permit was not issued in the month of February. Without one, I could not film theatrical performances in the Centre Province. Secondly, even if the permit had been issued, I had had a bad experience in Mundemba during the performance of Mundemba Students' Play. Some members of the audience mistakenly disconnected the electrical cables of the stage lights. Thus I could not take photographs and the film I had made was not clear. Having gone through this bitter experience, coupled with the fact that I had no permit, I negotiated with the directors and the directresses of the performing troupes to film their last rehearsals. The request was granted by some directresses and directors whilst others refused under the pretext that I might sell tapes of productions. The drama sketches, recitations and ballet dances were enacted on the 11th February at the Cameroon People's Democratic Party (CPDM) hall, which was temporarily used as a theatre hall. In this discussion, I will describe the plays as they appeared during the rehearsals and will add the responses of the audience during the formal performances at the CPDM hall. The discussion that follows includes the performances of *École Première Populaire de Mfou* and *Lycée de Mfou* which were filmed.

There were few security officers during the rehearsal and in the CPDM hall. Given the above factors, members of the audience expressed their views about the issues raised in the performances without fear. The audience that watched these performances was articulate. It was not like the silent audience that watched the Megang group's performances. This part is divided into two sections. Section one is concerned with the city performances of École Première Populaire de Mfou and section two concentrates on the performances of Lycée de Mfou.

2. B. (i). Performances of École Première Populaire de Mfou.

It was at 8 a. m on 23rd January 1991 when the pupils and staff of École Première Populaire de Mfou assembled in one of the classrooms that was temporarily converted into a rehearsal hall for the purpose of enabling me to film one of their rehearsals. The classroom was of the standard size in the Cameroon context and was roofed with zinc. The walls were half completed, hence the room was well ventilated. The floor was cemented and desks were lined up in one section of the classroom while the teacher's table stood on a platform, and faced the blackboard. During the rehearsals all the performers sat on the desks, some members of the audience sat on the windows, while others stood behind and in front of the classroom. The different classes in the school competed among themselves for the best performance. They produced sketches which included ballet, traditional dances, drama and recitations. In this study the dramatised sketches are examined although references will be made to the other forms presented.

The first sketch deals with the problems a wife faces as a consequence of having married a lazy, gluttonous and irresponsible husband. In this study, this first sketch is called Une Autre Rouge. Its first episode describes a lazy farmer who has a voracious appetite for food.

The performance began with a lazy farmer dragging himself out of bed. When he finally got up, he put on his working clothes (torn trousers, shirt, a torn hat, an old pair of rubber shoes) and carried a cutlass⁹ in his right hand and a long stick (which helped in cutting the grass) in his left. He approached his wife and told her about a

miracle which happened while he was in the bedroom. He showed his wife an object which he had excreted and maintained that he was dreadfully ill. He held his stomach and claimed that he had stomach ache, and thus wished to return to bed:

Fermier A mbot [Mon ami].

Femme A mbot [Mon ami].

Fermier J' ai vu une miracle aujourd'hui. Depuis que je suis dans la chambre, je me sens un peu malade...Je me repose.

The wife, who was already disgusted with his pretence of perpetual illness, pointed out that if he was seriously sick, why must he go to bed, and why was he refusing to talk about his illness with people.

The audience murmured and some said 'Monsieur, allez à l'hôpital'. This implied that they, like the wife, wondered why he preferred to return to his bed room instead of consulting a doctor. Some women also said 'enhe' (this could be equated to I wonder why he would not consult a medical doctor), 'les hommes' (meaning men).

The man was suffering from a particular illness which forced the anus to come out after excretion and he also excreted red objects. The wife believed that the illness only attacked gluttons, and so she accused the husband of gulping his meals like a python. It was assumed that people who suffered from this particular illness must be very selective as regards their eating habits. Unfortunately, the man's extraordinary love for food did not permit him to listen to the doctor's advice.

However, the man was seized with anger when the wife told the truth. When the woman realised that her observation had enraged the husband, she ironically apologized:

Femme Ah! Pardon moi mon mari. Tu vas déjà mourir?

At this point women members of the audience sighed. Her apology failed to mitigate the man's temper as he became infuriated and retired to the bedroom.

The second scene began with the woman soliloquizing over her fate. She had fears about the future. Judging from the woman's behaviour, she had conflicting notions about the usefulness of her husband's existence. It seemed she was trapped in the situation, since she could not elope for fear of becoming an object of scorn by relatives and the community, especially as the husband was ill. She was bound to live

with the man and look after him. The woman was basically trapped by the values of her community. She was married to a lazy invalid, and consequently, had to fetch food for the entire family. In spite of her initiatives, the husband had not given her the freedom to express her opinions. On the evidence of the woman's fate, she very much wanted to see the man dead.

I noted that women in rural areas were more active in farming than men. However, men ate larger quantities of food than the women. Perhaps the lady who produced the play was criticising men who allowed women to work in all aspects of food crop cultivation while the men could eat much of the food produced. Also, the directress of the troupe intended to instil into the young generation the notion that family responsibility has to be shared between husband and wife. The wife should not be the family's sole bread winner. It was on the basis of this fact that this drama was enacted by children between the ages of six and ten, who demonstrated a natural flair in the acting. This was so because most children in the urban centres spent their holidays with their grandparents, uncles and aunts in the villages. Thus they understood the problems rural women faced. In this respect, the drama was highly significant.

To return to the woman's soliloquy, while she was meditating over her destiny, a friend approached, just when she said 'quelle malchance'! The friend realised she was having problems and went to enquire. The woman's response only increased her friend's anxiety about the cause of the woman's problem. The woman related her whole life story and all the intricate facts surrounding her husband's illness to her friend. She told the friend that the husband went to the toilet this morning and excreted a red object. Her friend was astonished and wanted to know where the object was kept, but added that really she was embarrassed and wished to retire to her house:

Femme Akiea! [Ah!] Ce n'est pas vrai. Quelle malchance.

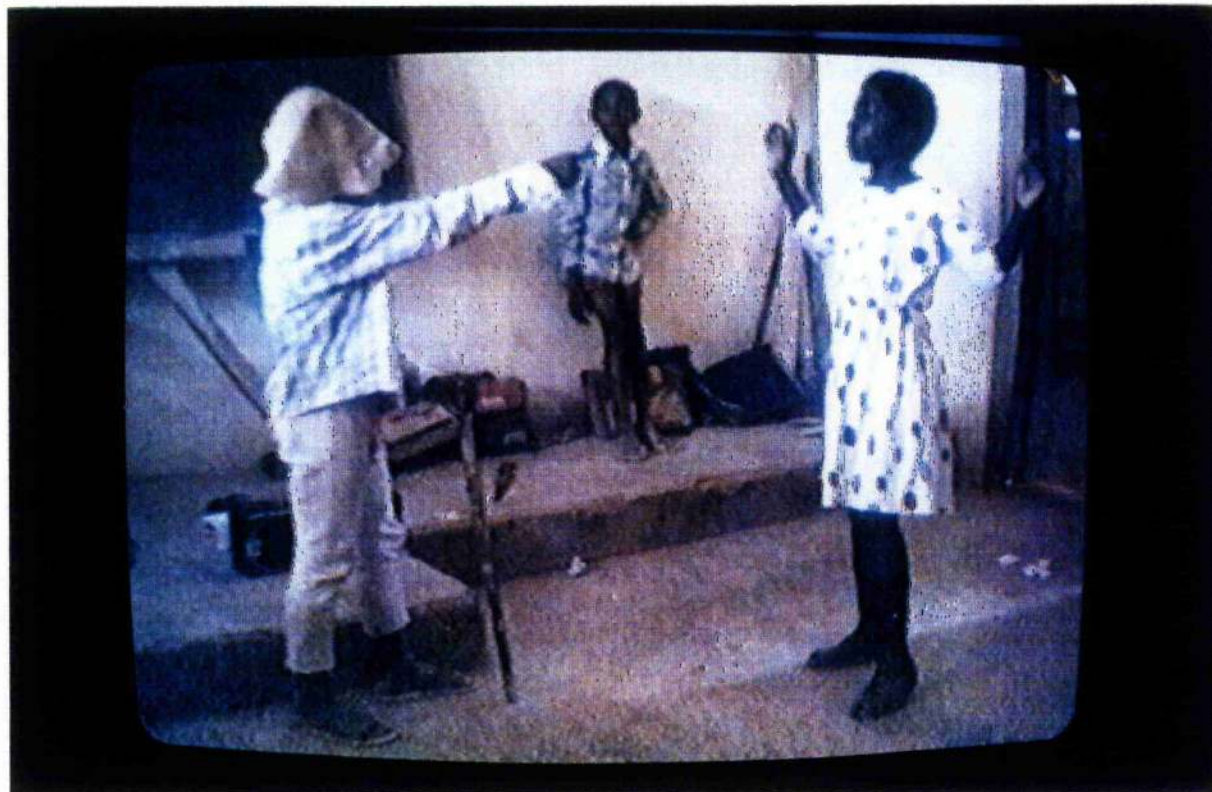
Ami Ah Mbot! [Ah mon amie]! Tu parles seule? Ton mari est mort?

Femme Ce n'est ne pas la mort. Je ne peux pas mourir. Mais c'est ma nature que de souffrir en silence, c'est ma destinée.

Ami Ah! Mbot! [Ah! mon amie]. Dis-moi pourquoi. Ton mariage c' est mon mariage, ton secret c'est mon secret.



Picture Number 14. Femme relates her intricate story to her friend in Une Autre Rouge.



Picture Number 15. Mari accuses femme for making no secret of the fact that he has an incurable illness.

Femme Mon mari a mal à l' estomac. Hier il est allé dans la chambre. Il est entré dans le cabinet de toilette, mais il a fait une autre rouge.

Ami Une autre rouge? Où c'est ça?

Femme Il y a ça dans sa chambre...

Ami Ne dis pas ça...J' entre chez moi (elle sort).See picture number 14.

As soon as she left, she went around asking people whether they have heard about the illness of her friend's husband. Hence, she betrayed the friend's confidence, and it became publicly rumoured that the man had an incurable illness. His disease became a piece of news and some people asserted that the man has not only excreted a red object but three objects of different colours (red, green and another colour). The radio also broadcasted the man's illness. Secrecy about the man's illness was broken. He became ashamed of himself and very angry with his wife who he believed spread the rumour (see picture number 15). On her part, she said she did not tell people about his illness. Nevertheless, the husband strongly believed that she was lying and tried to hit her with a stick, but she escaped.

At this stage, the males in the audience said 'les femmes ne peuvent pas garder un secret'. At the point when the woman's friend told the people about the illness of her friend's husband, it was the men who added that the man had an incurable illness and that he did not only excrete one red object, but three objects of different colours.

This rumour exacerbated the tension between the husband and the wife. The play ended with the wife insisting that she was not responsible for the rumour and the man trying to beat her. Male members of the audience said: 'Tu es un homme'. They were happy to see the man manifesting masculinity. These men who supported his actions failed to rebuke him for being a lazy gluttonous husband.

Gluckman maintains that although gossip and scandal have negative aspects, they also have social aspects which unite members of a given community (Gluckman 1963: 307 - 315). Following his line of thought, Paine argues that gossip is a powerful social instrument for any person who learns to manage it and thereby canalise its catalytic effect (Paine 1967: 278 - 285). Given the devastating consequences which the gossip in this play had on the patient, particularly on the marriage, it was clear that the vices of gossip outdid the virtues in this case. The producer of this play treated gossip

as an indecent behaviour which respectable individuals would not get involved in. Thus, in this episode, she taught people that it was not advisable to let even the most intimate friend into a secret. The play had features of a morality play.

This play was later performed for Mfou population on the 11th February at the CPDM hall, which was temporarily used as a theatre hall. During the performance, the audience made several remarks. I will highlight a few which I consider to be important. In the first scene when the man showed his wife the red object he excreted, some of the audience wanted to see the object. They said 'Didon (my friend), c'est quoi?' If this play had been performed in Mundemba the red object would have become a subject of discussion. People would have made several assumptions.

One noticeable point was the linguistic code used by female and male spectators in expressing their feelings towards the performance. Women used phrases such as 'les hommes' (men). They sighed, made exclamations such as 'enhe'. By contrast, the male in the audience explicitly expressed their views. They said 'Monsieur, allez à l'hôpital'. These different linguistic codes used by male and female members of the audience in expressing their respective opinions, inadvertently symbolised the two main characters in the play. The husband was very dominant whilst the wife was subordinate.

This play was produced by a female teacher. One of the woman's intentions was to depict the plight of women in a society dominated by men. Moreover, although one of the underlying intentions of this play was to induce husbands to share the family's responsibility with their wives, the woman was unintentionally perpetuating the myth of women's subordination and men's domination. The wife was portrayed as being very docile. She apologised even when she thought she was right. Her subservient attitude made many of the male members of the audience happy with the content of the play.

On the whole, the play portrayed social and domestic problems of laziness and gluttony, and it also taught husbands to share the family's responsibility with their wives. Furthermore, it portrayed a moral message about gossip, the fact that there can be no secret under the sun.

The second play Médecine Traditionnelle deals with the consequences of the fall in the price of cocoa. The play portrays a traditional doctor whose real occupation is



Picture Number 16 The traditional doctor's friend meets wife on her way to a visit to the traditonal doctor in Médecine Traditionelle.



Picture Number 17 Traditional doctor demonstrates his magical art.



Picture Number 18 Commissioner of police arrests traditonal doctor.

farming, but as a result of the fall in the prices of cash crops and as a consequence of the fact that the government has failed to pay for the farmers' produce at the appropriate time, he decides to practice traditional medicine as a part-time job. It is worth noting that 90% of the farmers have no access to bank loans (FONADER, the farmers' bank which granted farmers loans has been closed) and their incomes are seasonal. Thus this particular farmer resorts to practising traditional medicines not only as a means of providing his basic needs and a regular income but also offering him independence and human dignity. Given his motives for taking up the occupation, he is not well versed in the art. A woman goes to consult him on behalf of her sick husband who has received medical treatment but has not recovered. While on her way to the diviner, she meets the diviner's friend and collaborator (see picture number 16). The mischievous man enquires about her family and she narrates her family's problems and the motive of her mission. Having been told these, the man cunningly persuades the woman to use a longer route while he hastily rushes to relate the woman's story to the diviner.

While the woman was still on her way, the diviner had already been told everything about her and her family. He cleverly and quickly set up his working materials which included a white piece of cloth and other items. When the woman finally arrived, he told her about her husband's illness and also asked a few questions:

Sorcier Tu est marié avec deux enfants?

Femme Oui.

Sorcier Ton mari est malade depuis...

Femme Oui...

The interview continued, and as the diviner related more details of problems within the woman's family, she became very convinced that the man was an expert in his divination. On completing his revelations, he gave the woman some herbs to put in her husband's food. The woman was easily deceived by the deceitful witch-doctor. She was not the first nor the last victim. Benedict also discovered that the traditional healer's art lies in the acquisition of information through gossip and that even their most avid clients are complicit in the provision of such information. Far from being gullible, they have some awareness of the therapeutic value of confidential talk (Benedict cited in

Cohen 1985: 41). The credulous woman handed over the sum of money which the diviner had demanded and she left.

The second episode began when a Commissioner of Police went to consult the diviner. The diviner's mischievous friend met him on his way and although he endeavoured to trick the Commissioner, the latter outwitted the former. The Commissioner refused to take the longer route, thus they walked side by side to the diviner's consultation room.

The audience was pleased at seeing the two walk side by side. It jeered, hissed and laughed mockingly. This indicated that the audience doubted the traditional doctor's skill and did not want cheats in the society.

At the start of the consultation, the diviner tried to foretell the future of the Commissioner. He made several attempts to prove the worthiness of his expertise but all his efforts proved futile. He arranged his materials several times, but all his endeavours were hopelessly shattered and end in failure. In the end he gave up (see picture number 17). The Commissioner, who realised that the diviner tricked innocent people, took up the divining objects and in a frenzied state scattered them on the floor. He then dragged the diviner to the Police Station, where he was to be punished (see picture number 18).

The dramatist suggests in the play the fact that there are charlatans who practise the art of magic. His intention is to draw people's attention to the futility of the diviners' practices, and to change their views. The content is intended to serve as a warning to people who believe in what diviners say. Furthermore, the dramatist aims at inculcating into young people's minds the emptiness and futility of diviners' practices. Indeed, he is not alone in this. For renowned Cameroon dramatists, such as Musinger, have decried the skills of diviners. Yet, if such practices are as futile as the dramatists and other observers suggest, then what about those patients whose complicated illness have been cured by traditional medicine? In Cameroon some medical doctors advise patients to consult native doctors when they realise that a particular illness needs other forms of attention. For example, when a medical doctor discovers that his patient has yellow fever, he advises the patient to consult traditional doctors. Moreover, the last

Five Years Plan of the Cameroon Government encouraged native doctors to practice, as described by a recent writer:

The most recent advance in the domain of traditional medicine in Cameroon was the deliberation and adaptation by the National Assembly and the enactment of Law No. 81 - of 27 November 1981 to approve the 5th Five Year Economic, Social and Cultural Development Plan. Section 16. 1 . 2 entitled Guide line of the 5th Five Year Plan lists total health coverage of the country as one of the four main guiding principles of the plan. In order to achieve this, the health development sector will endeavour to set up a national primary health programme and develop traditional medicine which is an invaluable means of satisfying the basic health needs of the population...to lay down a joint strategy and method to effectively integrate traditional medicine into the national health plan...Traditional medicine [would] promote the survival, welfare, progress and happiness of the Cameroon people (Logmo 1985: 402 - 409).

Also, Allier acknowledged that traditional medicine is genuine (Allier 1929: 29-63). Furthermore, many countries - namely, China, India, South America and other developing countries have realised the importance of traditional medicine and they practice it. World Health Organization (W.H.O.) has also become aware of the importance of traditional medicine and is promoting its practice (Msonthi 1984: 695 - 6). I suggest that this play is criticising traditional doctors who have not acquired any formal skill in the expertise of traditional medicine. Hence, the play is not so much a criticism of all traditional medicine, but an attack on unskilful traditional doctors who are used as a means of portraying the shortcomings of traditional medicine.

The play also illuminates some of the problems the community faces as a result of the economic crisis. People have deliberately decided to become deceitful, with no regard for human dignity. The play portrays the moral depravity of people when faced with economic crisis. This example of the farmer illustrates the dramatist's point. Since he has not received cash from the sales of his cash crops, he practices traditional medicine as a last resort.

The play was staged on the 11th February 1990 at CPDM hall, where the government administrators assembled to watch the performances. One of the intentions of the producers was to induce the government to understand the problems of farmers and to look after them. The refusal to pay for farmers' produce together with the high cost of living were the causes of immoral practices and social discontent. Members of

the audience wanted to know how and why a country which had had an increasing economic growth suddenly found itself in the abyss of economic recession. This question has also been asked by several economic analysts such as Ngandjeu. He maintains that:

L' Afrique traverse depuis 1974 une crise économique sans précédent. Mais jusqu'en 1986, le Cameroun avait subi avec moins d'effets négatifs cette récession. C'est pourquoi le pays était considéré comme une oasis de prospérité dans un continent de misère...on comprend donc la surprise et l'étonnement des Camerounais, lorsqu'en décembre 1986, ils apprennent de la bouche même des autorités que le pays était en crise. Du coup des questions fusèrent de toutes parts (Ngandjeu 1988: 17).

Perhaps the producer of this play was asserting that although Cameroon was fortunate to be among the countries endowed with favourable climatic conditions, natural resources and industrious citizens, the government's failure to maximise these resources was the cause of the economic crisis.

It is worth noting that the farming occupation, which began quite promisingly and attracted over 75% of the population, now faces a bleak future. As a result of this, some farmers are no longer interested in farming. For example, the people at Esoki Bima pointed out that because the government has not paid for their cash crops, they have started felling their cocoa and coffee trees. Here, this play *Médecine Traditionnelle* was centred around a farmer who resorted to practising traditional medicine for the purpose of survival. One of the main sources of the country's revenue was from the sales of cash crops. In this sense, agriculture was considered to be very important in the country. A Cameroon writer Ngandjeu writes:

Le Cameroun est potentiellement riche...A cela s'ajoutent les cultures d'exportation: cocoa, café, banane, coton, arachide, etc.C'est pourquoi l' agriculture y est considéré comme la priorité de priorités (Ngandjeu 1988: 17).

Considering the importance of agriculture in the country, if the people refuse to engage in farming, the government's revenue would drastically drop. This would have far-reaching negative consequences, as the government would not have money to pay the salaries of civil servants and to carry out new projects, such as building new schools, hospitals and roads. Secondly, the occupation of farming occupies over half of the population. Therefore if indeed what the future holds for farmers is disillusionment, then many farmers would end in jail as the diviner in this play. Perhaps the producer of

the play was reminding the government that its failure to pay for farmers' produce would increase the rate of crime in the country.

As I have said, the play was enacted by children between the ages of six and ten. Perhaps the directress failed to understand that she was inadvertently dissuading the younger generation from becoming farmers. If the farming occupation is as fruitless as it is portrayed in the play, then it is only those who can find no other employment who will engage in farming as a last resort.

Considering the above points, I suggest that the producers of this play were strongly informing the government that its attitude towards farmers will eventually undermine the country's future economy, and the results would be irremediable.

The response of the audience was mixed. Some members of the audience were pleased to see the diviner punished. Others said 'Laisserai [sic] le pauvre fermier, il a beaucoup souffert'. These were members of the audience who understood the underlying message of the play. They understood that the farmer had resorted to traditional medicine as a means of survival. Others were pleased with the manner in which the diviner tried to invoke the spirits to come to his aid. The government officers who watched the play remained mute. They understood just too well that the play portrayed the bitter effects of the economic crisis.

This play was closely followed by recitations. The first recitation was entitled Quel Est La Famille Modèle?

La famille modèle c'est papa, maman et moi.
Papa commande tout le monde.
Maman est attendu de ta arrive.
Elle prépare la nourriture de tout le monde.
Et moi je suis l' attention de maman et papa.
Je suis la joie de papa et maman.

The response to this recitation was hilarious. It provoked mixed feelings. First, many members of the audience congratulated the little girl who performed the recitation. She was articulate and fluent. Secondly, the male members of the audience applauded and some even said 'It is true my child'. They loved the message of the recitation because it seemed to accept the established roles of the different sexes, the woman being the house-keeper and the man being the breadwinner. On the other hand, the arrival of children sealed the relationship between the two families. The wife and the

children looked up to the man. Some female members of the audience said 'A woman works also'. This implied that they were refuting the message of the play that the woman was solely the housekeeper.

This recitation was indeed depicting the nuclear family in Africa, a family consisting of the husband, the wife and their children. The new family is not interested in the wider kin of cousins, uncles, brothers, sisters and so on. Although some people prefer the nuclear family, there are many constraints. First, it is impossible to cut off links with one's relatives, because doing so would mean becoming a subject of ridicule. Secondly, even Christians who consider themselves the civilised class still believe in the power of the ancestors. These are a few factors amongst many. Therefore the possibility of establishing the type of family portrayed in the recitation is still an unattainable dream to many of the middle class in Cameroon.

The second recitation was entitled Où Est La Route Dans Un Pays Bilingue?

Bonjour monsieur.
 Good morning Sir.
 My name is Mr Moses.
 Mon nom est monsieur Jean Bosko.
 Je travaille au Ministère de l'Education Nationale.
 Can you show me the way, I am going to the Ministry of Finance?
 Oui vous continuez tout droit , et vous tournez à gauche.
 C'est le Ministère des Finance.
 Thank you very much monsieur Goodbye.
 Merci. Au revoir.

The recitation was in actual fact, a dialogue between an English-speaking Cameroonian and a French-speaking Cameroonian. The audience loved this recitation, because it depicted a reality in Cameroon society. Members of the audience laughed loudly and repeated the dialogue. The truth is that when a French-speaking and an English-speaking Cameroonian meet, particularly in Yaounde, the tendency is for each person to express himself in the language which he understands best. We noted that the nursery school's play at Mundemba ended with a song in which French was the dominant language. Also, Où Est La Route Dans Un Pays Bilingue? dwelt on the issue of bilingualism. The struggle to attain genuine bilingualism in the country is attracting theatre practitioners' attention. This implies that the theatre practitioners in both communities (English-speaking and French-speaking) have joined others, such as

teachers and the government, in making enormous efforts to ensure that the country becomes perfectly bilingual.

The message of the recitation was explicit. Thus many spectators laughed loudly. They said 'C'est vrai'. I think the teacher who produced this recitation intended to inform the people that after thirty years of independence, the two former Cameroons are not fully integrated. She used bilingualism to illustrate her case since only a few Cameroonians, to be more precise, many middle-class Cameroonians (Anglophones and Francophones) are perfectly bilingual.

In addition, the pupils and staff of École Première Populaire de Mfou enacted a variety of traditional songs and dances from the different ethnic groups (Bassa, Ewondo, Douala). The reason was to instil into the children the fact that the different ethnic groups in the country should appreciate the culture of others and strive to live in harmony and in unity. These troupes dealt with national issues, such as the fate of farmers, and the lot of women and human vices. Finally, ballet demonstrations were enacted. The intention was to make the children understand that the two cultures (western and African) can harmoniously prevail. Thus the children should strive to blend the two.

2. B. (ii). The Performance of Lycée de Mfou.

This section examines La Recherche Du Graal a play written by Felis Njandja, a teacher in Lyceè de Mfou and performed by Lycée de Mfou Troupe. The play describes the frustration of an unemployed graduate and the attitude of the rich towards the poor. The main male character Njoko, has a Bachelor Degree (BA) in Industrial Sciences. He has dreams of becoming a director of one of the country's industries. Unfortunately, he graduates at the time the country is experiencing economic crisis, he cannot get a job. During Njoko's school life, he was full of hope and ambition and entertained fantastic ideas on how to contribute to the well-being of mankind. Suddenly, he realises that his intellectual world has fallen apart and he cannot understand his situation. This is the primary theme of the play, the failure of Njoko to find work and realise his ambitions in a country in economic crisis.

The play was one of the pieces of drama which was performed on 11 February 1991 as part of the entertainments on National Youth Day. I watched and filmed the last rehearsal of this play on 5th February 1991 at Lycée de Mfou campus in the open-air. During the actual performance at the court hall, the audience responded emotionally and intellectually time and again as the play unfolded.

On the day of the last rehearsal, the sun was very hot and everyone was perspiring profusely. The audience sat on desks lined up in one section, while those who came late brought stools and benches or sat on the ground. Most members of the audience used umbrellas to shade themselves from the excessive heat. The troupe arranged an improvised stage under a shaded tree. There was a curtain which separated the actors and actresses from the audience. The stage property consisted of a table, two chairs, a cane cupboard and a few utensils. One of the nearest classrooms was converted into a dressing room. Actors and actresses had to rush to the class in order to change.

The performance began with a Reverend Father who called on the rich to share their wealth with the poor. The second scene of the performance started with Njoko as he received a reply to one of the numerous job applications he had sent off to private industries and the government sector. In the letter, the Director of the company maintained that in spite of Njoko's good qualifications and his wish to offer him a job, the company's budget could not stretch to funding new employment. Thus he could not help.

Njoko's mistress was not satisfied with the letter and she complained that a graduate should not become a victim of the economic situation. She had used her small amount of capital to sustain them until Njoko found work. Given the situation, she believed she was merely wasting time and money with Njoko:

Madame C'est trop! Un Licencié en Sciences des Industries qui est victime de la crise économique. Depuis deux ans, je me promettais qu'un jour ça changera. Moi une petite commerçante. J' ai mis toutes mes économies à ta disposition en espérant qu'un jour tu pourrais me rendre heureuse en travaillant dans une entreprise privée ou dans un Ministère. Ndongo Njokgo! Je t'ai assez supporté comme ça.

In response, Njoko agreed with her, but he maintained that he has tried to look for a job throughout the entire country. He implored the woman to be patient and asserted that when one was searching for something, the person must have hope, and that one could not find anything without searching. Above all, joy depended on suffering or sacrifices, and pain must precede joy. He maintained that it was only when one suffered hunger that one developed an appetite, and added that the value of anything depended on the suffering sacrificed:

Njoko C'est trop, je sais que c'est trop. C'est même vrai que c'est trop. Mais madame, crois-tu que le travail soit si facile à trouver? Que veux-tu que je fasse? J' ai des demandes d' emploi partout dans le pays. Un peu de patience madame. Quand on cherche c'est avec l' espoir de trouver et l'on ne peut trouver sans avoir chercher. Et surtout Madame la joie dépend de la peine et la peine fait partie de la joie. C'est quand on a faim qu'on éprouve le plus d' appétit en mangeant. On ne connaît la vraie valeur du succès qu' après avoir essuyer un échec au moins.

From Njoko's assertion, it was clear that he was a thinker and indeed was a symbol of the unemployed intellectuals. Hence when he implored his mistress to be patient, he was effectively imploring the unemployed to be patient and to look forward to the future. The advice was not limited to the unemployed; it was an advice to all sufferers. In contrast, Njoko's mistress was a metaphorical figure of the utilitarians who did not believe in abstract philosophy but in the concrete. She said Njoko's philosophy was too far removed from reality. She told him to keep up with time and she criticised him for refusing to accept the manual jobs which were offered to him. Furthermore, she rebuked Njoko for having failed in all the entrance examinations for professional schools. The mistress could be considered as a living symbol of the government which reproaches people who it (the government) considers impractical and unrealistic.

In Njoko's case, since he had his own views about human existence, the woman's advice was fruitless and Njoko remained undeterred. The woman was exasperated with him, so she collected her things and left the house to join her tycoon boyfriend. (At this point some members of the audience jeered at the woman). Even though the woman did not love the tycoon boyfriend, she wanted to live a life full of excitement. In this sense, Congreve's assertion in the Way of the World that it was

foolish to marry for money but silly to marry without it has stood the test of time. Because of the economic crisis Njoko was unemployed and deserted by the woman he loves.

The landlord came to collect his overdue rent. Njoko could not give any definite promise as he did not know when he might have any money:

Propriétaire Monsieur, cela fait 3 mois. Êtes-vous prêt à régulariser la situation maintenant?

Njoko Non, je ne suis pas encore prêt.

Njoko implored the landlord to understand that he was an unemployed graduate. However, the landlord maintained that whether Njoko was a graduate or not, it was irrelevant. All that mattered was for Njoko to pay his rent. Since Njoko could not give a definite date when he would pay his rent, the landlord dragged him to the police station where the matter was to be settled. At this juncture, the audience expressed mixed feelings. Some sighed, others said 'Monsieur, settle your rent'. 'Monsieur is evicted for non-payments of rent'. Others said 'Landlord, he is behind with his rent, but he will settle the rent'. These responses from members of the the audience indicated that they were not interested as to whether a person was an intellectual or uneducated. To them, what mattered was for people to meet their basic needs. From their laughter and cheers, I deduced that they were in favour of the landlord and regarded intellectuals as the non-entities of the society.

Faced with financial problems, Njoko started philosophizing. He maintained that he did not come to the world merely to eat, but to lay the foundations of a new system of thought. He did not come to throw the world into confusion but to transform and edify it. In his opinion, life was not based on eating and drinking. People should improve the world and also help others to improve morally. He had set his mind to use his knowledge to contribute to the well-being of 'Man', and in particular to use his eccentric ideas to restore economic growth to Cameroon at the time when the country was experiencing economic crisis. In this sense, Njoko was articulating the ideas of Fanon and other African thinkers who wanted African elites to contribute to the development of the African continent (Fanon cited in Erven 1991: 11 - 27).

Through Njoko's great ambition to transform the world, he would find a reason and structure for his existence and would also be integrated among those who were developing the community. His name would become immemorial and consequently be listed among the names of great men, such as Aristotle, Homer, and Shakespeare. To accept any job for the sake of earning a salary as his mistress had suggested would mean abandoning his ideas. Thus he had to let his principles hold sway irrespective of the obstacles he faced:

Njoko Je ne suis pas venu pour manger et pour me jeter sur la cuisse d'une femme. Je suis venu contribuer à édifier ce monde. J'écirai mon nom dans le grand livre où sont immortalisés ceux qui ont fait quelque chose pour le monde.

In spite of Njoko's view, he failed to realise that all human activities were useful to the community, and that to contribute to the well-being of mankind did not necessarily mean transforming the world. The playwright might have known this fact. As Whitman suggests, the usefulness of all human activities range through the duties of the President, mothers, lovers, the nurses, the cleaners and many others (Whitman 1990: 1 66).

Furthermore, Njoko's refusal to pick up any employment was the root of his problems as he failed to understand that satisfaction and self dignity could only be achieved by being economically independent. Dependency stole away human dignity. Baumann maintains that: "One of the worst insults to be heard is that of aaguri kadubo...Those who willingly depend on others' food are without their own worth" (Baumann 1987). Njoko's friend visited him, and the two chatted over the whole idea of life. Later, Njoko became very hungry and he staggered. He held his stomach and complained that since the breadwinner (his mistress) left, he lived on one meal a day. The friend who had observed the frustration, disillusionment and sour despair of unemployed academicians believed that Njoko had intellectual constipation. He made an epigrammatic statement:

Ami Monsieur a une constipation intellectuel.

At this stage, many members of the audience laughed loudly at the joke of intellectual constipation, while others were silent. Considering the fact that the audience was made up of the different sectors (businessmen, uneducated, students, landlords,

and government administrators) in the community, it was no surprise that the different factions of the audience should respond differently. Perhaps members of the audience who remained silent were students who were meditating over the value of western education, whilst the landlords laughed as a way of ridiculing intellectuals.

Njoko's friend was merely mocking unemployed intellectuals who could not afford their basic daily needs. It is true that human beings have the same basic problems to put up with. Nevertheless, when it comes to a point when an individual cannot afford his daily bread, he or she loses human dignity.

Besides portraying the problems of unemployed graduates in the society, the playwright is unintentionally discouraging the young generation from pursuing western education. Although some people attain western education for the purpose of acquiring knowledge, others pursue it for the sake of economic advantage. Therefore, if the economic advantages that come along with education are not apparent, most Cameroonians will spend less time in school. The play entitled Médecine Traditionnelle depicted the plight of farmers. If neither the farming occupation nor western education brings economic rewards, there is little hope for Cameroonians .

Njoko's predicament is similar to that of characters in other novels who have dreams of contributing to mankind's well-being. For instance, in the The Interpreters, Soyinka describes the problems of a young engineer who returns from Europe with an M.A. in Civil engineering. He intends to construct good roads in Nigeria. However when he returns, he is made to sort files in an office. He becomes very frustrated and eventually dies. Perhaps the playwright is criticising the government for failing to maximise human resources for the purpose of developing the country.

Njoko's financial situation became critical, a matter of life and death. He wrote a letter to his millionaire businessman brother asking for financial aid, but only managed to enrage him. The brother maintained that Njoko had a B.A. and should look for a job instead of preferring to live at his expense. He summed up by declaring that he had no money for free-loaders:

Frère Pour qui me prend-il? Depuis qu'il a sa licence; il ne veut rien faire. Et il compte vivre à mes frais. Je n'ai pas d'argent à envoyer à d'homme qui voudrait vivre sur les dépenses des autres.

The audience jeered at the brother and some repeated a line from a popular song. 'Monsieur Nkannkang restitue mon argent avant de mourir' ¹⁰. Others said: 'Il avait le monde à ses pieds'. This scene gave members of the audience who were among the class of the underprivileged the chance to show their disapproval of the rich. Theatre was therefore used as an arena where people could show open disapproval of greediness, avarice and callousness towards the poor. I suggest that the playwright includes this scene depicting the rich brother's response to Njoko's letter with the intention of showing how the rich have become very uncaring and callous towards the poor.

In the last act, Njoko received a letter and discovered that his mistress was dead but has left a handsome legacy which consisted of a mansion and large sums of money in the bank. Initially Njoko was excited, but he refused to accept the legacy under the pretext that he had not worked to earn the money.

Njoko believed that suffering must precede enjoyment and that enjoyment must be worked for. Since he did not work to earn the money, he would not accept his mistress' legacy. Perhaps the playwright is mocking people who embezzle funds. He is implicitly educating Cameroonians to work for their incomes. For example, it was alleged that the Minister of Finance put 243 million francs into his private account in USA (Cameroon Post, No 59, February 27 / 1991). The playwright is like other Cameroon writers who believe that members of the privileged class in Africa does not really work for their income. Indeed, after examining Cameroonian literature, Bjornson asserted that:

Convinced that a government should express the will of all the people, some of these writers, poets and novelists attacked Ahidjo's nation-building rhetoric as a hypocritical sham that camouflaged the acquisition of wealth and power by members of a privileged class much like those in the process of consolidating their positions throughout Africa (Bjornson 1991: xvii).

To Njoko death was the only solution. Njoko died, and the audience spontaneously made several comments. I will quote a few of them. Some spectators said: 'He was a man of his principles'. Others said: 'The emptiness of life'. Many people have come and disappeared like Njoko due to the fact that the world did not give them a chance to fulfil their ambitions. Besides other features, the play has characteristics of a fate drama

in the sense that the hero is driven to death by a kind of fate. On the whole, the dramatist seeks an explanation of the role and position of man in the universe. Perhaps this might provide a reason for man's existence. Njoko's niece summarised the uncle's belief and fate:

Nièce Il est mort! Il est mort! Musique de la solidarité et de l'entente entre les frères.
 Une musique qui donne l'espérance. Ah! Que la nature est injuste. Ne trouvez-vous pas que c'est injuste de la part de la nature? Que les enfants du même père, de la même mère et de la même famille ne soient pas aussi favorisés également. Celui-ci meurt de faim alors que les autres ont tout ce qu'ils désirent. Non il ne s'agit même pas de ça... Il s'agit d'une certaine force naturelle qui nous guide...Njoko était un homme constamment piégé par cette force. Après il s'est trouvé comme une goutte dans un bassin d'eau, comme un poisson prisonnier des eaux...Tout effort était inutile. Une seule issue- la mort, la mort...C'est vrai que la vie n'est pas facile. Elle n'est pas non plus difficile. Elle est comme ça.

The niece aimed at teaching mankind that it was very unreasonable to fight with the forces of nature. However, we do not understand whether Njoko was fighting with those who have caused the country's economic crisis or with nature. Whatever the case, Njoko was destined to live in a world of wild hopes and to die as a man of great principles.

Njoko's death could be interpreted from many angles. First, the playwright shows that the attainment of western education is not a guarantee of the acquisition of material wealth. Therefore, Njoko the intellectual is among the poor in the society. Second, the playwright teaches Cameroonians that there is an insignificant number of Cameroonians who hold fast to moral principles, in the midst of a society which has betrayed human values. Thirdly, he cleverly portrays class stratification by using two brothers to make his point - why must children of the same mother experience such great disparity in terms of the acquisition of material wealth. Whilst one brother is starving, the other lives in opulence. Literally, the question is why should some Cameroonians starve whilst others live well. Fourthly, he shows how some people struggle and die unnoticed. Njoko's ambition to contribute to the well-being of the

people of Cameroon, his refusal to analyse the situation thoroughly and take a practical view, and his desire to act virtuously in all ways to hold to moral principles, all lead him to live a life of disillusionment, sour despair and meaninglessness. The performance showed that Njoko died and both he and his ideas were lost like a drop of water in an ocean. Lastly, the playwright depicts the effects of the economic crisis on the unemployed, particularly the unemployed university graduate.

The playwright is very pessimistic. He does not believe that Cameroon will come out of the recession. Njoko, a symbol of Cameroon's progress, dies. His death signals a bleak future for Cameroon.

The playwright portrays worldly riches and wisdom as two gigantic opponents, each struggling to throw the other to the ground. The performance showed that Njoko's brother was blessed with material wealth, whereas Njoko was blessed with wisdom and intelligence. Even though Njoko's brother was very wealthy, at one point in the performance the businessman told his daughter that despite his wealth he could not afford to buy a car. If he could not afford to live a life of luxury, therefore, he was the only one who knew where the shoes pinched. In this respect, the playwright draws the audience's attention to the fact that the rich are not as happy as the poor are made to understand. They have their own personal problems.

However, he portrays businessmen as the most successful in the community and the intellectuals as the beggars. If this is the case, and as it seems to portray a realistic picture of the Cameroon community, the obvious question will then be, what will become of the academic world? Is it going to disappear as vapour, even though the world needs men of ideas? There are people who prefer to acquire knowledge for its own sake regardless of the poor economic advantages for such work. However, others acquire knowledge because of its multi-faceted economic rewards and advantages.

During the performance, the audience reactions to this play were many and varied. Some said that it was worth living the life style of Njoko's brother: 'Je préfère vivre comme son frère'; some sighed and said 'The world we live in'; others said 'C'est la crise économique'. Yet, some expressly considered Njoko's style of life a waste of time, energy and intelligence. Some said 'Toute l'économie a été traitée

avec maladresse'. Others said 'It was the reduction of the price of cash crops in the world market'.

After the performance, some members of the audience wanted to know the causes of the economic crisis. Some maintained that it was the government which was solely responsible, others asserted that it was neo-colonialism which has caused the crisis while others held the view that it was a combination of internal, external and natural forces. These problems ranged from embezzlement, avarice, the fall in the price of cash crops, the international exchange rate and other internal problems. These different interpretations reflected that people interpreted the causes of the economic crisis from different angles. Their differences in opinion support the notion that life is beyond human explanation. To put it in the words of the niece, 'life is not difficult, but it is not easy, it is just as we see it'.

During an interview with the playwright, Njandja in January 1993, he said after the first performance of this play in the mid-1980s, some people who watched the play wrote commentaries in newspapers and in magazines. He gave me some of the commentaries. The Service of Arts and Letters summed the play in a few words "...Et pourquoi toute cette déchéance humaine?...Bref parce que les hommes se sont faits plus sourd et plus envers d'autres hommes".

The substance of this play depicts the prevailing social and economic situation in Cameroon. The play is documentary theatre and a work of commitment by a keen observer of the community. It advocates social and ideological reforms. This play is also about the problem of goodness and the difficulties of finding justice in an unjust world. The style of the play begins and ends without comic relief. Even when Njoko is happy, the happiness is very brief. The dramatist makes use of intrigues which are full of surprises. At one point Njoko is penniless and suddenly he becomes very rich. Having considered the fact that the government is featured as an authoritarian regime which controls the population, the dramatist uses the metaphor of an unemployed graduate, and thus conveys his message about the implications of the economic crisis, such as the problems unemployed graduates face in the society, the attitude of successful businessmen towards the poor, the attitude of women towards love and money and so on in an artful manner. He also bases his arguments on moral and

philosophical themes. Through this theatrical device, he avoids arousing the government's fury. This is so because the playwright merely presents Njoko and describes the problems he faces as an unemployed graduate. He does not provide the root causes of Njoko's problems.

In this sense, each member of the audience who thought that the play was criticising the government and openly rebuked the government was to be responsible for his/her own interpretation. During an interview with the playwright in January 1993, I asked why he used this subtle device. He said a play was like a myth which had several layers of meaning. He emphasised that a play should be able to make people think, meditate and reflect. A play should not be considered as a Bible word with just one meaning. This subtle device used by Njandja was also used by the producer of Médecine Traditionnelle and the Megang group, both of whose performances allowed the audience to interpret the social and economic problems depicted in the plays.

2. C. CONCLUSION

I have analysed selected city performances in Mundemba and Mfou cities which are respectively part of the English-speaking and French-speaking zones. The differences and similarities are examined in terms of the themes and motives of the performances, the theatrical devices employed by the troupes, the responses of the respective audiences, and the function of the performances in the two cities. Each of the above is analysed differently.

2 C (i) Themes

The themes of the performances in Mundemba dealt with the people's daily, immediate and often perceptible issues, such as the cultural identity of ethnic groups, the absence of roads, recreational facilities, unequipped libraries and moral decadence. For example, the GHS Students' Play depicted the problems of students, such as the absence of an equipped library in the institution. The play also depicted the problems facing the people of Mundemba, for instance, the absence of a tarred road in Mundemba. The play entitled The Drunkard dealt with human vices. In contrast, the performances in Mfou dealt with three main issues: first, philosophical and existential issues such as the notion of life and the origin of class stratification; second, national contemporary issues such as the country's economic crisis, unemployment, the fall in the price of cocoa; and thirdly, human vices such as gluttony, gossip and a callous disregard for the people. Asked why the dramatists, producers and directors of the troupes did not tackle the problems facing the students in their particular institutions and the inhabitants in their particular locality, Mungee (one of the two producers and directors of Lycée de Mfou's performance) responded by maintaining that the problems engaging the pupils, the students, and the inhabitants of Mfou and the surrounding villages were identical to the problems facing 80% of Cameroon's population. The themes of the performances therefore dealt with national, general philosophical issues, and with human vices.

Some of the reasons why the two representative communities (Mundemba in the English-speaking zone and Mfou in the French-speaking zone) produced performances that dealt with contrasting themes were the same as those advanced in the conclusion of chapter one. The first reason could be traced to the era of English and French administrations in Cameroon. I have already discussed this issue at length. Here I will still show how these contrasting legacies influenced some of the themes of theatrical performances in the two representative cities. During the era of the French administration in Cameroon, the administration made the French-speaking Cameroonians to look up to the government for their basic needs, such as tarred roads, and to consider themselves as Cameroonians. It is from this point that the play at Lycée de Mfou dealt with the problem of unemployment, class stratification, philosophical issues, the question of existentialism and the problems of the poor. By contrast, the British established the policy of 'indirect rule' which implied that the people had to provide their basic necessities through self-reliance. Thus in Mundemba, the different groups produced theatre that dealt primarily with the problems of their respective groups. For example, the students of GHS produced a play requesting the government to equip the institution and the CWF produced a play entreating men to give women a degree of freedom. This implied that the legacies of British and France administration have continued in cities as well as in villages.

Secondly, the geographical location of the representative communities had an enormous influence on the choice of themes. Mundemba shares boundaries with the Republic of Nigeria. The people of Mundemba believed that the town was neglected by the government, and moreover, the government exploited resources of the region. Thus, some of the performances dealt with these issues. For example, the GHS students' play drew the government's and Pamol Industry's attention to the absence of good roadlinks in the region. The students were fully aware of the fact that Pamol Industry made substantial profits, thus part of the money should be invested in good roadlinks. Also, the Women Centre's play Emeli called on WWF to stop harassing the indigenous people from carrying out hunting expeditions. By contrast, in Mfou the government had not established an industry such as Pamol, and there was no WWF in Mfou which prevented the indigenous people from using the resources of the forest in

Mfou. Interest groups, such as pupils and students in Mfou, produced theatre that dealt with national issues. For example, the play entitled Médecine Traditionnelle dealt with the consequences of the country's economic crisis. Also the recitation entitled Où Est La Route De Un Pays Bilingue dealt with the problems of bilingualism in Cameroon. Thus whilst the theatre troupes in Mfou were concerned with national issues, their counterparts in Mundemba dealt with the problems of the different interest groups in Mundemba.

Thirdly, some of the women in both cities (Mundemba and Mfou) were the breadwinners in their homes. The women produced plays entreating men to share family responsibility with their wives. This was clear in the play entitled Une Autre Rouge by École Première Populaire de Mfou and in the play entitled The Drunkard by CWA women in Mundemba. Many women at Mfou were educated and thus worked in the civil service. Those who had not attained western education engaged in petty commerce, such as the market women who formed cartels and were financially independent. They did not produce plays which entreated men to give them more freedom. In contrast, the women in Mundemba produced plays imploring men to give them more freedom. For example, the CWF's play aimed at entreating men to allow women to attend the CWF meetings where they could learn new skills and thus become financially independent. Also part of the Women Centre's Play Emeli was intended to persuade women to attain financial independence. These groups of women have similar ideas to those of some feminists who pointed out that:

Feminists have begun to realise that until the ideology of [the] male breadwinner...has been challenged, no real advances will be made towards transforming women's status. (Bennet et al 1981 85).

These three factors (English-speaking and French-speaking historical experiences, the geographical positions of the two representative zones and, lastly the financial position of women in the representative zones) were the main causes of the differences in the themes of theatrical performances in the respective zones.

Like one of the themes of the theatre which is traced from the era of European administration, one of the motives of the performances also originates in the European administrative legacies. It has been reiterated that during the British administration, the administration encouraged the people to be self-reliant. This legacy did not disappear when the administrators left the mandate. Theatre practitioners in Mundemba used theatre as a medium through which they can persuade people to embark on physical projects and also edify the community. This was apparent in the response of the Senior-Divisional Officer and the school administration to the GHS Students' play. In contrast, the French administration did not encourage the people in its mandate to engage in self-reliance projects. Theatrical troupes in Mfou did not produce plays with the intention of requesting the audience to engage in physical projects. Rather, one of the intentions of the performances was to persuade the audience to strive for moral uprightness. For example, one of the purposes of the play by Lycée de Mfou was to draw rich businessmen's attention to their moral decadence, avarice and callousness to the poor in the community. Troupes in Mfou also produced plays with the intention of persuading people to reflect on certain philosophical issues, such as the nature of class stratification and the purpose of man's existence. For example, the protagonist, Njoko, in Lycée de Mfou's play questions the purpose of his existence. He believes that by exercising his academic knowledge he would give meaning to his existence and the universe. By questioning his own purpose for existence, he is in actual fact requesting each member of the audience to examine her function in the world. The play ends with Njoko's niece suggesting 'that the world is not difficult, it is not easy, but it is just like that'. By implication, she is saying that man has the liberty to drag himself out of the mud, and then begins to exist, such as Njoko's mistress who abandoned penniless Njoko for a tycoon boyfriend. Alternatively, he can live a life of sour despair, such as Njoko's life.

Secondly, theatre practitioners in Mundemba city used theatre as a medium through which they were able resolve concrete practical issues. For example, the different interest groups in the community used theatre to oppose the views raised in other theatrical performances. An example was the Women Centre's play Emeli which rejected the opinions raised in Agoon's play entitled The Farmer and the Hunter that the farming profession yielded more remuneration and had better prospects than a hunting

occupation. By contrast, theatre practitioners in Mfou Sub-Division did not use theatre to contradict the opinions raised in other plays. There was no discourse through the medium of theatre concerning the opinions of opposing interest groups.

Thirdly, the theatre troupes in Mundemba were primarily concerned with the problems of their respective groups. For example, one of the motives of the GHS Mundemba's play was to draw the government's and WWF's attention to the absence of a good road in the Ndian Division and specifically in Mundemba. Also, one of the intentions of the play Emeli (by the Women Centre) was to expose the problems the indigenous people faced as a result of the activities of WWF. One of the reasons why theatre troupes in Mundemba were concerned with their own issues was due to the fact that the theatre practitioners said that the government created Ndian Division with the intention of protecting the natural resources in the area from their avaricious neighbour, Nigeria. City theatre practitioners hold the opinion that the government has neglected the people. Instead, the government was solely interested in exploiting the natural resources in the region. Thus the people themselves have to look for solutions to their problems. From this point of view, the play entitled Emeli depicted the problems that the WWF brought to the region, and the GHS students' play drew the government's and Pamol Industry's attention to the absence of good roadlinks in the region in spite of the fact that Pamol Industry made substantial profits.

In contrast, troupes in Mfou did not produce theatre with the intention of addressing the problems of minority groups. Rather, they produced theatre which dealt with national issues. For example, the École Première Populaire de Mfou and Lycée de Mfou used theatre to portray the consequences of economic crisis such as unemployment, and this theme was apparent in the situation of Njoko in the Lycée's play, and in the École Première Populaire's play Médecine Traditionnelle depicting a farmer resorting to traditional medicine as a means of survival. The reason why theatre practitioners in Mfou dealt specifically with national issues was due to the fact that they believed that the government did not neglect the people of Mfou. It had protected their interests and would continue to do so. Indeed, Mefou Division was created in order to protect the interests of the people of the region, and this can be seen in the fact that the

Sub-Divisions that make up Mefou Division are located in other divisions. For instance, Soa, a Sub-Division in Mefou Division is in Mfoundi Division.

Fourthly, the number of educated and business women in Mundemba was insignificant as compared to the number in Mfou. Thus, one of the reasons why the women produced theatre was to persuade women to attain western education beyond the primary level or engage in economic activities. This would enable them to become financially independent. In contrast, the women of Mfou who had attained both produced theatre with the intention of depicting the lot of women in relation to national issues.

Given the different motives for producing theatre in the two respective cities, the term development was also perceived differently. Like the village troupe in Mfou Sub-Division, the troupes in Mfou city regarded the term development as referring to intellectual objectivity, the ability to reflect on philosophical and national issues, such as class stratification and the causes of the country's economic crisis. On the other hand, like the village troupes in Mundemba Sub-Division, the troupes in Mundemba city thought of the term as denoting a combination of practical thinking and the realisation of physical projects. They concerned themselves with revealing what they considered to be the truth about their environment and everyday events, as well as with carrying out physical development projects. Therefore the term development had different connotations in the two communities. It is clear that in Mundemba city, theatre practitioners' perception and application of the term development had helped create physical changes in the region. For example, the GHS Mundemba Students' play precipitated the government and the school administrations to install pipe borne water, electricity and others. This implied that the term development was fruitful when it was applied theoretically and practically, that was when it was conceptualised and then put into practice.

An important difference in the idea of development can be pointed out between village and city performances in the Anglophone region. Although the term 'development' involved intellectual objectivity and the realization of physical projects in both areas, the aims level of development are different. The urban people of Mundemba perceived the term 'development' to refer to the acquisition of modern basic necessities

such as electricity, pipe-borne water, tarred roads, modern houses, and recreational facilities. The GHS Experimental Theatre Troupe used theatre to request the school administration as well as the government to equip both the school and Mundemba city with such essentials as pipe-borne water, electricity, an equipped library, recreational facilities, a canteen, an auditorium and tarred roads. In contrast, the village performing artists wanted bulldozed roads, markets and primary schools. It is noticeable that Mundemba inhabitants, whose quality of life was better than that in the surrounding rural regions, had already acquired many elementary basic necessities, such as primary schools, a market and bulldozed road. Consequently, their ambition was to acquire additional modern facilities and services. Although 'development' as a concern referred to the same process of engaging in intellectual objectivity as well as providing physical and material facilities, the levels of demand were different according to the relative lifestyles of the communities. Each community thought of the notion in terms of an advancement in the material and economic quality of people's life, it was simply the base level of existing facilities which determines people's priorities.

The inhabitants in Mfou generally had more facilities except the lack of good communication facility, such as tarred roadlinks and telecommunication. But because of government patronage they believed that these crucial necessities would be provided. From this position of comparative luxury and secure in the knowledge of government patronage, they were able to indulge in philosophical and moral issues, and cultural speculations, rather than engaging in physical projects and practical issues.

2 C (iii). Theatrical Devices.

In terms of aesthetics, school troupes in both Mundemba and Mfou did not effectively employ theatrical devices, they merely recite their lines. However, there were a few actors and actresses in the school troupes who had a natural flair for the acting profession or perhaps had the time and commitment to develop small talents.

Many of the performances in Mundemba city were produced and performed by people who had not acquired a professional education in the art of theatre. One of the reasons why plays were performed by non-professional theatre practitioners can be

explained. After independence, administrators and politicians failed to meet the expectations of the socially disadvantaged (farmers, peasants, unemployed and those on low incomes) of the community. Like the colonial administrators, they perpetuated a form of western drama which had nothing to offer to the people, such as suggesting and finding solutions to the people's problems. The people who had envied and aspired to emulate the middle class culture (represented by new politicians and administrators) became disillusioned. Faced with realities, the people created a new theatre accompanied by a new language (a combination of French, English, Pidgin and local vernaculars) to enable them express their disillusionment and their plight. This new theatre became accessible to 80% of the Cameroon population, and is now very popular in Cameroon. Therefore anyone can enact her problems by using theatrical performance and employing the language and cultural repertoire she understands. Members of the CWF, the CWA, and the Community Development Staff and many others have become theatre practitioners although they have not received any formal traditional or western education in the art of theatre.

These non-professional theatre practitioners produced what Kerr calls 'syncretic theatre' (Kerr 1981: 145-155). They also used multiple languages in a single performance. For instance, although the French language predominated in the *École Première Populaire de Mfou's* performances, Ewondo, Pidgin English, Bakossi and Bakundu languages, and traditional dances were added for the purpose of endowing the performances with regional and national flavour. Theatrical troupes in Mundemba city were no exception, as they used multiple languages in a single play. This strategy has several consequences.

First, it is aimed at engaging the audience in the performance. For example, when the wife in *Une Autre Rouge* says *ekica* (this word expresses excitement) members of the audience who belong to the Ewondo group and those who understood the Ewondo language responded with another Ewondo word *azambowam* (one of the meanings is 'trouble'). This response made the other members of the audience roll with laughter even though overall the audience pitied the wife. By using a variety of vernaculars in one performance, the performers indirectly appealed to the different groups who made up the audience. For example, members of the the Bassa group in

the audience were pleased to hear Bassa words and phrases, and this was true of other observers from different groups. But the use of French and English language operated at a different level. It united people from the diverse ethnic groups.

Anderson writes that language and print technology unites people who belong to the same territory (Anderson 1990). Here, theatre unites people who belong to different groups, and thus it plays a similar role to that of print technology in Europe. However, print technology provides psychological unity to people of different backgrounds. This is so because newspapers and novels are read by individuals in isolation. By contrast, theatre unites people psychologically and socially because theatre creates a social occasion which brings people (the poor, the rich, the uneducated, the educated, women and men) together. Print technology and theatre have the powers to provide the means for people of different backgrounds to imaginatively participate in a common medium and to create psychological unity. As is obvious, theatre goes beyond providing psychological unity to creating a social occasion. Lastly, the strategy of using multiple local languages in a single performance with the intention of appealing to the different groups in the audience can be seen perhaps as an intentional act whereby city theatre practitioners were implicitly calling for the government and policy makers to imitate theatre practitioners by pleasing the different groups that make up Cameroon. Banham in his paper entitled "Languages of African Theatre: A Nigerian Casebook" 1991, attempts to examine the problems Nigerian theatre activists face in selecting a language which would convey their messages to the entire Nigerian population.

Most of the performances in both Mundemba and Mfou were improvised. Several reasons account for this. First, improvisation was possible because the troupes enacted their daily experiences, as was the case of improvised performances of École Premier Populaire Mfou. Similarly 90% of the performances in Mundemba city were improvised. Secondly, most productions were created by semi-educated and non-educated and so the writing of scripts was inappropriate. Thirdly, even some educated theatre practitioners were not able to sacrifice time to write plays because they had primary occupations, such as teaching and trading. For example, during an interview with Kome, the director of the GHS Theatre troupe Mundemba, he maintained that to write a play might take several weeks, months or even years, and he had little time for

script writing. Also, he wanted the script to be perfect. He added that the script might be abandoned before completion due to the fact that the main topic in the script might no longer be of interest at the time the script was completed and produced. Therefore, when there was a controversial issue in the community and he had an idea to communicate to the community, he and the theatre troupe instantly improvise a play based on this idea. Given the above reasons, he preferred to improvise plays. Lastly, even plays by Felix Njandja (major playwright), were only available in a manuscript. The high cost incurred in printing books was one reason why they were not published.

Troupes in Mfou conveyed their messages in a subtle manner (in comparison with the troupes in Mundemba Sub-Division who used a straightforward style, see page 216). Oblique messages could only be grasped by sensitive members of the audience (those who understood the language of theatre). An example is the letter from an employer to Njoko:

Directeur des Industries
à Monsieur Ndongo Njoko
Monsieur,

J'ai l'honneur de vous informer que malgré une étude bienveillante de votre dossier il n'est pas possible de vous réserver une suite favorable faute de poste budgétaire disponible.

Veuillez agréer M. l'Inspecteur mes sentiments distingués.

Le Directeur Général.

The playwright does not overtly attack the government on the issues of gluttony, avarice and international trade that are seen as the causes of the economic problems. The playwright instead employs a protective strategy and thus avoids irritating the government, which might consider him a dissident who preaches subversive ideas to the community. This action might lead to his imprisonment. Also, Mfou is in Centre Cameroon and the government does not exploit the division's resources. Furthermore, the people believe that the government is their patron - whom they would not want to offend overtly. Thus theatre practitioners studied here used a subtle style to articulate national controversial issues instead.

In contrast, theatre practitioners in Mundemba city employed a direct, blunt language to convey their messages. An exemplary case is an excerpt of the GHS Experimental Theatre Troupe's performance:

Bih Is it because there is no money to build the auditorium? Well I'm sorry for asking that silly question. Everyone knows the effects of economic crisis.

Wase Economic crisis? Economic crisis indeed! Each student pays five thousand frs every year as the Parents Teachers Association (P.T.A.) levy. The Almighty alone knows what happened with the money. Last year the P.T.A. budgeted one million frs for science equipment, the money has been spent but the laboratory has not changed.

The reason why the troupes in Mundemba city used blunt language, and thus engaged directly with crucial socio-economic and political issues can be easily explained. Theatre practitioners in Mundemba held the view that Ndian Division was blessed with abundant natural resources and the government was extracting the natural resources in the region without developing the area. From this perspective, theatre practitioners were indifferent towards the government and consequently they spoke their mind quite frankly. They have now come to a point where they could not lose any more than they were already doing at present.

Most of the performances in Mfou and Mundemba were produced by women. For example, all the plays by École Premier Populaire de Mfou were improvised, produced and directed by women. In Mundemba, apart from the GTC, GHS and WWF performances, all plays were improvised, produced and directed by women. This showed that women were more active in the performing arts than men. Why women have dominated theatre in these respective cities can be seen as a consequence of the fact that they lacked the prominent political and economic statuses of men in their respective communities. Women did not feature in the conduct of local administration, they did not hold any administrative post (such as Divisional Officers). Women's views were not only under represented at local government but they were not taken seriously by a government dominated by men. Moreover, women found it more difficult to acquire enough capital to enable them to establish large businesses, which could then provide them with the economic influence in the society. Because they were barred from formal public office and were denied access to economic resources, they were not very influential in the sphere of public community politics. Thus the women have resorted to theatre as one of the means through which they could be heard. Theatre

provided them with a voice through which their political views, their problems, issues and concerns could be articulated.

Chapter one of this thesis concluded that the level of theatre activity is directly related to the level of economic and material development. Whilst the Bima people produce many theatrical performances dealing with a search for a cultural identity and development, the Ngolo people who have many educated people and enjoy a higher level of material benefits do not produce as many such performances. This implies that people who lack certain basic necessities and who consider themselves the deprived of the community produce many more pieces of Cultural Action Theatre than the people who are in a privileged position, and who have acquired almost all their basic needs. Viewed from this perspective, women who consider themselves to be in the less privileged position in the community use theatre as a media through which they can improve their intellectual and economic potential, as well as to convey messages to those in superior positions. Theatre is the voice and vehicle of the aspirations of the disadvantaged, the oppressed and the marginalised.

2 C (iv) Audiences' Responses

One noticeable difference between the audience in Mfou city and the audience in Mundemba lies in the fact that the audience in Mundemba remained in the theatre after a performance with the intention of discussing the performance. I have already shown how after the Students' Play, the Nursery School play and many others the audience remained in the hall and discussed the performances. By contrast, the audiences at Mfou did not remain in the auditorium after a performance for the purpose of discussing the performances.

The responses from the audiences in the two cities were positive. Through the use of theatre, people were motivated to embark on physical projects and to change their views. In Mundemba city, the CWF play induced men to allow women to join the CWF. Also GHS Mundemba Students' play precipitated the government administration to install pipe borne water and electricity in the institution.

Since the performances in Mfou city were not aimed at initiating practical development, the audience did not respond by carrying out concrete projects. However, the issues raised in the performance were analysed and discussed. In particular, the publication of written reviews of the performances in newspapers and discussion of the performance on the national television placed the issues that theatre raised in public domain.

2 C (v). Functions

The functions of theatre in the two cities can be compared, for performances certainly played a major role in each urban area. In Mundemba, theatre practitioners have succeeded in precipitating the government administrators to provide basic necessities, as in the case of the GHS Experimental theatre troupe which successfully secured facilities for their school. Furthermore, through the use of theatre, theatre practitioners have succeeded in changing the views and attitudes of some spectators. A case in point is the performance by CWF, which persuaded men to allow their wives to attend CWF meetings.

Similarly, theatre practitioners in Mfou also elucidated and exposed certain blurred issues which may have been imperceptible to the people. For instance, every Cameroonian was aware of the effects of the economic crisis. Nevertheless, when the consequences of the economic crisis were dramatised on stage, the people viewed the problem from new and different perspectives. The audience became fully aware of the implications of unemployment. For example, after the performance of Lycée de Mfou, many observers wanted to know and discuss the causes of the economic crisis. Theatre helped to change these people's views and also helped them analyse controversial issues from various novel angles, as well as getting them to speculate on controversial issues. I interviewed Mungee, a producer and a director, about the achievements of the plays in the society. In response, he said:

People come to theatre for various reasons. Some come to laugh, some to absorb the message, others to interpret the messages, some to criticize the productions and others to admire certain actors and actresses. Again when people respond positively, one cannot tell with certainty whether they are responding to the entire performance or to an aspect of it such as the message, the style or the costumes...One only

judges from the reviews of the performance in newspapers and in the television, and from the size of the audience in subsequent performances. Therefore one cannot say with precision. (This interview was conducted on the 24 / 01/ 1991 at Lycée de Mfou).

I believe Mungee did not want to say categorically that the performances played a positive role in the society. I would emphasize that these performances played a role in the local community. For if they did not, people would not take the trouble to watch the performances. The fact that some theatre goers were not interested in the messages but in the entertaining aspect showed that this function had not been completely relegated even in a society where people gave priority to the messages of performances. These theatre goers, who wanted theatre to entertain, believed that theatre should not only deliver messages but should entertain. They held a similar opinion to that of Schechner, who distinguishes between efficacy and entertainment. Theatre must entertain. Any theatrical performance which fails to fulfil this aspect is no longer theatre. It becomes something else.

Because the people of Mfou were better off than those in Mundemba, it was no surprise that some theatre goers in Mfou wanted theatre to fulfil its entertaining function. Furthermore, the fact that theatre was seen by the government as potentially subversive put the government on the alert, and this was one function of theatre. Indeed the Cameroon government was only too aware of theatre's potential in this regard. The government recently imposed a legislation which stated that:

On proclamation of a state of emergency, and throughout the duration thereof, the Minister in charge of territorial administration may, by orders that shall be immediately enforceable order the closure, as and when necessary...of entertainment halls meeting places of any kind; organise the control of the press and of all kinds of publications, audio-visual broadcasting and theatrical or artistic productions (Relating To The State Of Emergency. <<National Assembly Fourth Legislative Period Legislative Year 1990 / 91 Second Ordinary Session>>, Bill No. 462/ PJL/ AN, 22nd November, 1990.

In a nut-shell, the plays' themes, motives, style (the use of a mixture of languages, traditional performing instruments, folk media and local songs and dances) and venues (the open-air, markets squares, church and council halls) have created a new audience which was different from the middle class audience (the audience that was made up of the elites, the ruling class, and the rich). The new audience consisted

of the poor, the unemployed, the uneducated, the educated, the government administration and the ruling class. This new audience responds emotionally, intellectually and occasionally by carrying out concrete projects. This theatre served the concerns and interests of this new audience. The theatre served a number of functions.

¹ Community development staff is charged with the responsibility of educating the rural as well as urban communities to maximise human and natural resources. Community Development was created by the government to educate village people on issues such as health, agriculture and so on.

² Labels attached to these plays are not exclusive. One play can be more than one thing. Categories are therefore not absolute - they are merely heuristic.

³ The students at the Women Centre were female drop outs from secondary schools.

⁴ An association of women in which each woman contributes a specific sum of money each month and the money is given to one member. The process continues until each woman receives her share.

⁵ Working Class in Cameroon refers to white colour jobs, such as typists, nurses, but not barmaids and domestic servants.

⁶ Could be equated to 'well! I have done it'.

⁷ Drop outs in this sense refers to women who for one reason or another did not complete their academic courses, such as secondary school or high school.

⁸ Pamol Industry was established by the Germans during the German Administration in Cameroon. The industry covers much of the land in Ndian Division. The indigenous people in Ndian Division said that the land was seized from their ancestors by the Germans. Now the Cameroon government had taken over the management of the industry. But like the German administration, it was solely interested in the profits of the company and did not invest in the form of tarring the road from Kumba to Mundemba (the headquarters of Meme and Ndian Divisions).

⁹ A long trimmed iron tool used for chopping grass.

¹⁰ This song is about a man who lends money to his friend. He learns that the friend is dead and is very angry. He visits the corpse and asks it to resurrect itself, and return his money before it returns to its final rest.

PART TWO: NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.

Any thing that will get people to think and feel for themselves, that will stop them delegating these functions to the politicians is important to our survival. Theatre has a role to play in this (Fugard 1989: xviii-xiv).

Part two of this study is concerned with the description and analysis of national performances by the Anglophone and Francophone performing artists. Unlike the performances discussed in the first part of this study, which were produced and performed by village and city artists, the performances discussed in this part were produced and performed by national theatre practitioners. Furthermore, each performance dealt with a series of themes, such as leadership, women's lot, human vices. Instead of discussing a single performance in a single chapter, related themes are grouped and treated in separate chapters. Hence each chapter deals with a specific theme. The section is divided into four chapters, chapter three is concerned with the role of leaders in their respective countries' development, chapter four examines the role of women in national development, chapter five dwells on cultural and political identities and their impact on national development, and chapter six is concerned with ethics, morality and human vices. This part also includes the general conclusion.

CHAPTER THREE

POLITICAL LEADERS AND DEVELOPMENT IN ANGLOPHONE AND FRANCOPHONE NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.

This chapter examines the role of leaders in development in the Anglophone and Francophone national theatrical performances. The performances examined in this chapter depict inefficient, tyrannous, oppressive and avaricious leaders who promote underdevelopment in their respective countries. The chapter is divided into three parts. Part one investigates the role of leaders in development in Anglophone national performances. Part two examines the contributions of leaders to the country's development in Francophone national performances, and part three is the conclusion.

3. A. POLITICAL LEADERS AND DEVELOPMENT IN ANGLOPHONE NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.

This section which examines the role of leaders and development in Anglophone national performances focuses on specific plays such as Butake's And Palm-Wine Will Flow, and Eyoh's The Magic Fruit. Butake and Eyoh are playwrights, producers and directors of plays as well as being senior lecturers in the Department of English, at the University of Yaounde. In addition, one of Bate Besong's plays is examined, namely Beasts Of No Nation. Bate Besong is a poet, a playwright, a producer and a director of plays, and also a teacher at the Lycée Bilingue Molyko, Buea. The plays by these playwrights were performed by the University Theatre Troupe and The Yaounde Children's Collective Theatre. References are made to Butake's The Lake God, Eyoh's Munyenge and Bate Besong's Requiem For The Last Kaiser.

Butake's And Palm-Wine Will Flow is set in a region occupied by the Ewawa people. The play is a political satire concerned with a ruler's obsession with power, which leads to his eventual destruction by the people. The play describes the people of

the land of Ewawa, their beliefs, culture, society, politics and the role of the goddess. The characters in the play include: fon (traditional secular ruler), Shey (the traditional religious ruler), Nsangong (friend of Shey), Messenger (from the palace), Kwengong (the first wife of Shey), Tapper (palm-wine tapper for Shey), Kibaranko (the blackest of all the jujus in the land), Gwie (one of the friends of the fon), Kibanya (the man who receives a red feather from the fon), and the Earth-Goddess. There were also the singers.

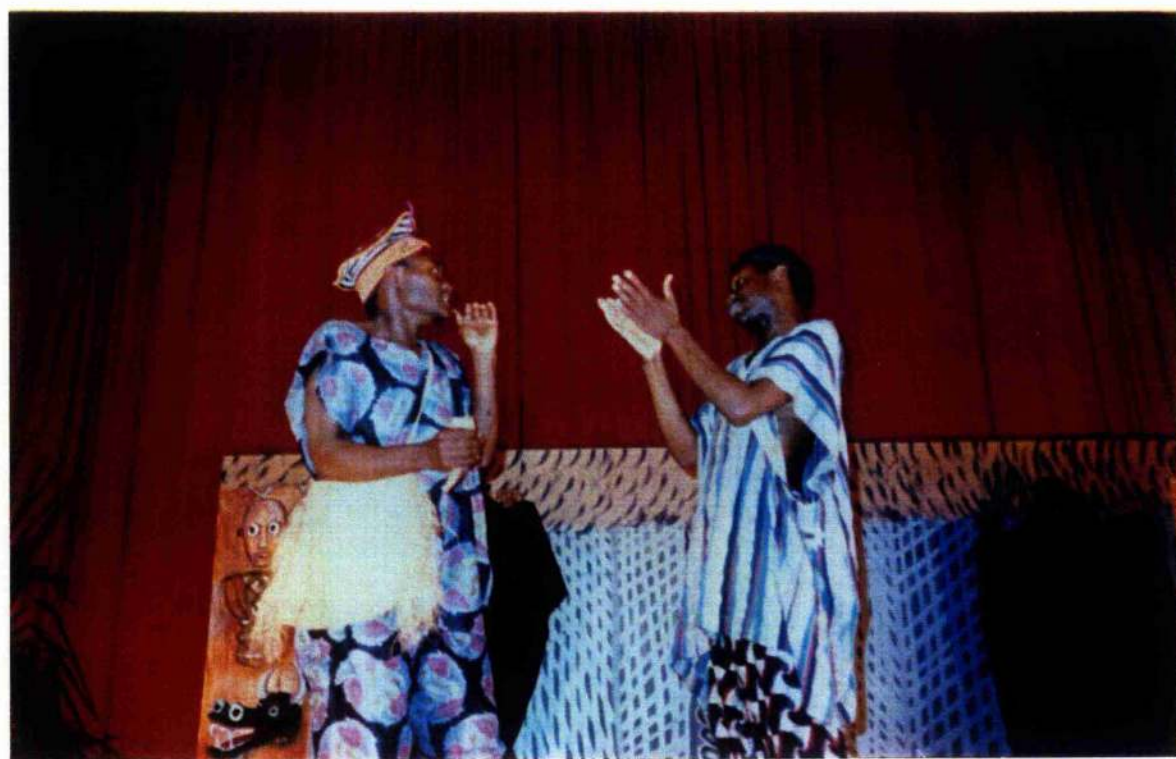
The main characters in the play are Shey and the fon. According to the Ewawa people, there are two worlds - the invisible world represented by Shey and the visible world represented by the fon. The invisible world is revealed by Shey to the fon and the elders, and it is in this way these two worlds interact for the benefit of all Ewawains. Shey protects the traditional values of the clan. He has a strong belief in traditional religion and values, and also believes that the ancestors, goddesses and gods rule over natural resources. Rain gods and fertility gods are therefore worshipped by Shey. By contrast, the fon is obsessed with power, is corrupt, authoritative, suppresses patriotic and intelligent citizens, and looks down on traditional religion and values. His sacrilegious behaviour provokes the retributive wrath of the goddess who becomes outrageous. The goddess causes a plague in the land, and also enters into the body of a woman who uses feathers to murder the fon. The play ends with the people of Ewawa rejoicing over the death of their greedy fon. They announce that they do not want their land to be ruled by a few greedy men.

And Palm-Wine Will Flow is a one-act play without scenes. The first part of the play describes the fon who suppresses his people to the extent that apart from Shey, no citizen points a finger at the fon's faults. The second part of the play depicts the processes through which Shey and his supporters, and women through the aid of the goddess, get rid of the authoritative fon. The last part of the play describes the final decision of the people to restore democracy in the region.

The play deals specifically with two issues: first, the role of a recalcitrant fon (traditional secular leader) who through his own fault is led to his own destruction, and second, the role of women in their determination to get rid of a tyrannical leader. In this



Picture Number 19. Shey and the mask in And Plalm-Wine Will Flow.



Picture Number 20. Shey and Gwei. The latter is transfixed by the Earth goddess.

chapter, I am concerned with the first theme and the second theme will be examined in chapter four.

And Palm-Wine Will Flow was initially performed at Amphi 700 at the Yaounde University, on 27th March 1990. This play was performed in the presence of the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Niba Ngu (who is from the North West Province) and his friends. At the time, the farmers (who constitute the bulk of the population) were angry with the government which had not paid them for their cash crops. This performance could therefore be read as an implicit call for the Honourable Minister of Agriculture (who was a member of the government) to discuss the problems of the people with the government.

During this first performance, the Amphi 700 was full. The stage property consisted of two calabashes, a pot, a bamboo stool, two masks elaborately decorated with black fibre (the performers in the play used these masks to disguise themselves and play various characters in the play). There was a gourd, a sacred gong, fresh green leaves, young palm trees (see picture number 19). Anything that made a sound and vibrated was used as a musical instrument, for example, elephant tusks. Images of the landscape, such as wild animals were skilfully drawn on the walls. These animals and palm-trees provided a vivid fauna and flora of the region. There was a house, and the building technique was relatively straightforward. The house was required for a simple purpose - for shelter and as well as a shrine. These drawings and the architecture were the means through which the playwright, director, producer and the dramatists communicated their vision of the place in which the play was set. The performers wore traditional costumes. The fon tied a loin cloth around him, wore a cap and held a raffia bag. Shey and the messenger wore traditional jumpers and trousers. The messenger wore short trousers and a shirt. All the actresses wore uniform wrappers and blouses.

The performance began with the fon decorating one of his councillors with a red feather, the presentation of which announced that the individual had become one of the community policy-makers. During the ceremony, however, Shey refused to participate, on the grounds that the entire government was corrupt, and that such positions of power were given to irresponsible people. He asserted that the fon was more concerned with decorating irresponsible people who purchased posts and occupied strategic

government positions. Hence a post lost its value when it was bought. Shey added that the councillors were hand-clappers and their main function was to drink palm-wine rather than to discuss major national issues affecting the well-being of the country:

Voice But Shey, do you or do you not know that Kibanya is receiving the red feather today from the sacred hands of the Fon himself. And palm-wine will flow as usual.

Shey I am going to the grove. My obligation is to the gods of the land, not to the Fon and palm-wine...When people overfeed and soak themselves in palm-wine, they take pleasure in desecrating their gods.

Nsangong You speak the truth, Shey. When there is too much in the belly, the head becomes an empty shell.

The audience agreed with the assertions of Shey and Nsangong that palm-wine was used to subdue and silence the people. I would suggest that the fon deliberately used alcohol as a means to blur the people's critical and intellectual abilities, thus prevented them from reflecting on controversial issues in the land of Ewawa.

When a man drinks excessive palm-wine, he becomes oblivious to the socio-economic, political and cultural issues. The fon becomes a manipulator, like Shakespeare's Iago who skilfully leads Cassio to drink too much alcohol which eventually leads to him losing his senses. Epie Ngome in For Better And For Worse, describes a leader who cunningly encourages his people to take excessive alcohol with the intention of making them accept his policies. These playwrights, such as Bole Butake and Epie Ngome, are not the first thinkers in Cameroon to depict the negative role of frequent ceremonies which involve the excessive intake of alcohol. Political analysts such as Forje has also pointed out that ceremonies have become too prevalent as a basic feature of Cameroon politics, and this gives room for corruption and constitutes a loss of useful working hours (Forje 1981: 153). Frequent merry-making undermines consciousness of duties and obligations and also retards national development.

A voice warned Shey that he was playing with fire. Shey repudiated this accusation and added that the fon had lost vision, that the noble men and elders of the land listened only to greed. They feared the fon who had surrounded himself with

sycophants. He said the fou did not rule nor did he consult his councillors ¹. He turned to the audience and added:

They ...The game [the wealth of the country] must be shared. Let every one have his fair share...But your Fon knows none other than his family and those that come to him with gifts in return for the red feather.

The audience applauded, stamped their feet, clapped, raised and stretched their hands, and some said 'na so oh' (it is true). The audience laughed until some of them called for silence. The audience was excited because these were things that they would like to say but no one would have listened to them. This performance was saying these things that everyone thought thereby became the people's mouthpiece.

We noted in chapter one that the women of Fabe village, who had no political power in the community, used a mime as a means of articulating their political views. Also, the Megang group used songs as a means of articulating their political opinions. Here the Yaounde University Troupe together with the playwright used theatre to transmit political messages. This indicated that one of the functions of theatre in this community was to create a political arena where people with different political opinions could express their views.

In the midst of this hilarious milieu, there were members of the audience who simply grinned. This group consisted of the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and his friends who were the guests of honour. They heard and saw things which were not expected. Perhaps they thought that the Yaounde University Theatre Troupe invited the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and his friends so that they could unravel the problems of the people and also prick the conscience of these top government officers.

To return to the performance, Shey concluded that the fou had lost vision and he was surrounded by greedy noblemen and elders of the land. Nsangang who was from the palace warned that Shey should watch his tongue (see picture number 20). Shey ignored Nsangang's warning and performed a song in honour of the goddess.

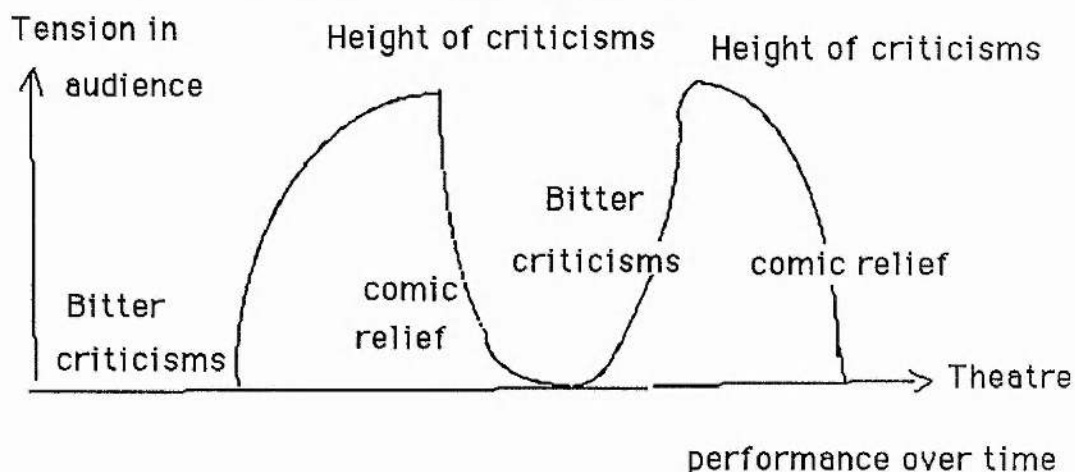
Shey moved to the auditorium and indicated that he wanted the audience to join him in chanting the song. The audience was only too ready to act as the chorus. Through the simple activities of hand-clapping, shaking of heads and humming the

lyrics of the song, the audience added its own rhythm and beauty to the song. It was indeed, an hilarious atmosphere:

Shey	Aya ooú é é é la'a keu dore bi'an dore iyéé iyie aya ooú ayaoó ooú ééé ngong'e keu dore bi'an dore dore Iyéé iyie Aya ooú Ayaoó ooú ééé.	When the world is at peace we are happy.
Audience	aya-oo ooú è è è a la'a.	
Shey	Iyéé iyéé aya oo ayaoó ééé beunwi'a keu dore bi'an dore.	When the land is peaceful, we are peaceful.
Audience	Ayaya, ayaya.	
Shey	Iyéé iyie Ma'nfor Subisu'oo yi n'ang bané.	When the gods are happy, we are happy.
Shey	Keuo leeh nji'i ngo'oh loghe nfaa loghe nhaaboh ayayo ayayo keu shwa'a keu bi'é. Chong Kuru ngu Wasé njà. Wasé njà wa nda bone wasé, nya.	Queen mother, come and join in this dance. Whether you have hidden it under a tomb bring it to the people. For the scrotum is dropping.
Audience	O O O Chong.	
Shey	Wasé njà Chong nda bone wasé, nya Chong noo mulu'u, jèu'achu'u.	Chong eat fowl and and achu.
Shey	Achia wole, achia munwi	Hail noble house
Audience	Wulai achia munwi	Hail house.

This comic relief scene diffused the gloomy and potentially tense atmosphere that characterised the previous scenes and the audience temporarily forgot the previous bitter criticisms. The director, producer and performers used comic relief and serious scenes to balance entertainment and message (see diagram for illustration).

Fig 6 The Rise and Fall of Tensions in the Performance



Shey's wives informed him that the fon had seized their land and given it to Kibanya (the man who had recently been decorated with red feathers by the fon) and his wives. Shey told his wives, except Kwengong (his first wife) to return to their

homes. He invited Kwengong to come into the sacred grove and told her that in the past when red feathers had value, people like Kibanya were not decorated. But Kwengong did not agree with the husband. Instead, she stressed the fact that despite Shey's enormous services to Ewawa, he had not been awarded. She moved around her husband, stared directly into his eyes and entreated him to understand that times have changed. In chapter two, Njoko's mistress entreated Njoko, who believed in moral uprightness, to go with the times. In this performance Kwengong implored the husband who also believed in moral values to understand that times have changed, therefore he should change also. Women were portrayed by these playwrights as being pragmatic. They abandoned moral principles for the purpose of satisfying their material desires. In response to her advice, Shey asked the wife whether she wanted him to pay respect to a man who respected palm-wine and food only. The audience was pleased with this question. It applauded and said 'enh' (one of the meanings was 'I doubt'). In this particular case, it referred to 'I doubt whether she wanted Shey to behave like other sycophants'. This implied that some members of the audience and the playwright did not approve of moral decadence for the purpose of survival. Shey added:

Shey What is the worth of a title if it must be bought ? Those clamouring for the red feather are only making the Fon richer. Today with a few goats and fowls, even the lowliest of the low are beginning to file in the royal presence. How do you have a land in which every one is a title holder?

The audience did not wait for Kwengong to answer Shey's question. Rather, it responded in a chorus 'mmmm?' (meaning, 'I wonder'). It was not merely the content of what Shey said that moved the audience, it was the manner in which he said it. He turned to the audience, talked slowly, posed the question to the audience before turning to his wife. It was one of those tense moments in the play when the audience was placed in a predicament. Although a greater proportion of the audience were on the side of Shey, they were wrestling with their conscience. There was complete silence which was only interrupted with sighs and the sound 'mmmm'. The hilarious atmosphere that had characterised the performance had changed. Here the playwright and the actor on stage were directly asking the people whether they would sacrifice moral rectitude for the purpose of acquiring fame. It was a difficult question, and the audience faced

difficulties in giving a precise answer. The playwright and the performers indeed, delved into the minds of the different groups that made up the audience. We noted earlier that the performers had attacked the government representatives. Now they were attacking the people. They did not spare anyone, and this made the atmosphere gloomy.

Shey told the wife to stop worrying about the farms since the Earth-Goddess has pronounced a drought in the land. Whilst they were talking, Shey heard footsteps and instructed Kwengong to enter in one of the masks decorated with black fibre and play the role of the Earth-Goddess. Then entered the palm-wine tapper who informed Shey that the watch-dogs of the fon had beaten him and seized his palm-wine and palm bush, and they have caught Nsangong (Shey's friend). As the two were talking, the Earth-Goddess repeated her pronouncement:

Earth Goddess The curse remains

The plague remains...

Gwei (the fon's watch-dog) entered the shrine just after the Earth-Goddess had finished pronouncing the plague. Gwei gave a scornful laugh and told Shey that he (Shey) was a rat playing with the fon, a cat. He warned that 'a cat does not play with a rat'. Shey reminded Gwei that he was standing on the holy ground. At this juncture the Earth-Goddess made Gwei to remain still. Gwei begged Shey to let him go. Shey mocked and said the fon should come and help him (Gwei). Shey added that the fon had drank wine until it had made him stupid. Gwei admitted that Shey had spoken the truth, the fon was really drunk. Shey warned Gwei that if the fon heard what Gwei had just said, then Gwei's head would fall. Gwei admitted that everybody said these things in private. Shey rebuked him and said that in public Gwei sang his praises and called him 'Shepherd of the land'. Gwei accepted this but also admitted that he and other councillors were scared of the fon. The notion of fear was lucidly portrayed in the following dialogue between Gwei and Shey:

Shey You even adulate him. You worship him! You worship a man!

Gwei Out of fear, Holy one! I have already said so.

Shey (Shey turns to the audience and poses this question) How can the whole land be afraid of one man? I say how can the whole land be afraid of one man?

In this way, the audience could not avoid being drawn into the performance. The audience was silent. This silence was only interrupted with sighs, murmurs and the exclamation 'enh' and 'mmmm'. Shey repeated his question for the purpose of emphasis. He wanted the audience to absorb his message. Also he did not only ask the question but also watched the audience steadily and expected an answer. The fact that Shey turned to the audience and posed the question, and also expected a reply, meant that he was not merely a character in the play talking to other characters, he was also acting as a demagogue rhetorical politician addressing loyalists and dissidents². The audience's silence indicated that the people who made up the audience were also wondering why they should be fearful of a leader who suppressed his people. Why should people fear to criticise such a leader openly. Why was it so difficult to initiate dialogue. Shey's question was a trap and the audience remained silent.

This type of response from the audience is considered in this study as a combination of meditative and intellectual response. That is, the audience does not only think, it meditates over the issues raised in a performance.

The playwright is a moral political philosopher. He implicitly questions the accepted political order of a community in which the people allow one greedy man to rule over them. Butake does not want the society to go to sleep on some comfortable bed of unquestioned dogma. He believes that if the pursuit of truth and justice is to continue, these dogmas must be questioned and challenged. According to him, this is what development and progress depend on. People like Butake who ask these disturbing questions and who are intensely curious about the answers have an important role in the community. There are very few people like Butake who engage in this activity and use rational methods which are themselves open to critical scrutiny. Butake is an ardent supporter of progress. He wants the society to awake from sleep, to stimulate the intellect and to keep society moving.

To return to the performance, Gwei concluded that the fon imprisoned or beheaded people who refused to work for his interest. Even when the fon imprisoned and beheaded people's relatives and friends, no one complained for fear of suffering the same fate:

- Gwei: My father's wives had been seized. And when he went to the Fon to complain, we never saw him again. He never came back. He disappeared. Shey! ...After that it was easy to take his palm-bush.
- Shey And instead of taking arms to avenge the death of your father you allied with the Fon.
- Gwei How was I to fight alone, Shey? With what force? I would have disappeared too.

In this play, the playwright portrays the fon as a tyrant, a glutton, a murderer and uncaring. As we shall see, this image of a leader is portrayed in most of the national performances by Anglophone and Francophone theatre practitioners alike.

The audience's knowledge of the Cameroon contemporary social, economic and political background made many of them think that the play revealed the truth; it seemed to reflect the contemporary social, economic and politics in the country. The audience made several remarks; some said it was true and others sighed in disbelief and felt sorry for themselves.

And Palm-Wine Will Flow was performed at a period when students, opposition loyalists and other dissidents, such as Professor Asanga (a senior lecturer in the Department of African Literature, the University of Yaounde) were detained in police cells. Some of the detainees were severely tortured and others went missing. I myself visited some of my friends and relatives in one of the cells. Different forms of media - the radio, rumour and the newspapers - spread information about these beatings, tortures and imprisonment. Cameroon Post reported:

The national Coordinating Committee of Cameroon Students Yaounde University has announced that eight of its members are so far feared dead from brutality by security forces...The students were surprised that despite their official complaint against the systematic torture, molestation and starvation of the hundreds of detained students to the Head of State, President Paul Biya, he and his government have remained adamant and indifferent to the plight of the defenceless students. The students executive...has launched an appeal for solidarity and general mobilisation. This, they stated, was to ensure that the deaths in police and gendarme torture chambers known as cells do not continue. (Cameroon Post, No 65, April 11 - 18 1991: P 1 & 15).

To return to the performance, Gwei could not leave the spot on which he stood. He was held by the goddess. He continued to plead that Shey should allow him to leave. Instead of Shey responding, the Earth-Goddess spoke:

Earth-Goddess The sun shines on the hills. The sun shines in the valleys. The
 sun shines in the valleys. The sun shines in the depths of the
 streams. The sun shines.

On hearing the unearthly voice, Gwei was petrified and tried again to run away. But the goddess used supernatural power to stop him from fleeing. Gwei bent, knelt, cupped his hands and swore in the name of the Earth-Goddess. He pleaded and used different intonations to persuade Shey to let him go. His actions, his facial expressions and his differing intonations, combined to make the audience roll with laughter. The audience was satisfied with this particular scene, and members of the audience who were not necessarily interested in the message loved this theatrical artistry. Even the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and his friends were pleased with the theatrical aspect of this particular scene. Shey finally used his spells which enabled the messenger to leave, and this marked the end of another period of comic relief in the play that diffused the tension built up over the previous scene.

Because the fou forced his people to remain silent, seized his people's property, murdered his opponents, and was generally uncaring, Shey intended to send Kibarankoh (the blackest of all the jujus in the land) to destroy the palace. Thus he ordered the messenger who had just returned from the palace to enter into one of the masks decorated with black fibre. This mask represented the Kibarankoh. Shey beat the Kibarankoh with some fresh green leaves. He also made Kibarankoh eat some of the potion he collected from a pot. After Kibarankoh had been beaten with the leaves and eaten the potion, he became agitated, frenzied and began to howl. Both Shey and Kibarankoh ran from one end of the stage to the other as Shey shouted 'ah Nko, Nko do your work', whilst Kibarankoh jumped, skipped and demonstrated on stage. The audience which was very silent until then burst out into hysterical laughter. The audience really enjoyed the theatrical demonstrations of Shey and Kibarankoh. Some repeated the phrase 'ah Nko, Nko do your work', and some imitated Kibarankoh, repeating the sound 'kwo'o kwo'o'. Kibaranko went to the palace. He returned to the

sacred grove and related his actions in the palace. He had broken all the calabashes containing palm-wine, and had frightened all the people including the fon to abandon the palace. Before he left the palace was completely deserted.

The women were not satisfied with what Kibarankoh did in the palace. They unanimously agreed to poison this tyrannous fon and so liberate Ewawians from suppression. The women planned to use their own urine which they placed in a pot, and their leader, Kwengong, took it to the fon. At this stage, the Earth-Goddess entered into Kwengong, and so the latter was physically a human being but her voice and gait were unearthly:

Fon (looks curiously into the pot then turns away suddenly, holding his nose) Urine! Urine? What is the meaning of this abomination. I will die first.

Kwengong Then you will die, indeed, Chila Kintasi! [could be equated to the Almighty leader] Your own mouth pronounced judgement.
Die and deliver the land from the
Abominations of drunkenness and gluttony!
(The Fon begins to reel until he collapses) Die! Chila Kintasi, Die
Die! Fon. So that we may think.
The people need your death to think.
Die! Die! Die!

Kwengong's message implied that the fon ruled over a society where people were forced to remain silent regardless of their potential. The community was similar to the community of silence described by Freire (Freire 1972). The fon must therefore die in order for the people to realise their mental and physical potential. The idea that the ruler must die for the betterment of his people is reiterated in Bate Besong's Requiem For The Last Kaiser.

The fon refused to drink the urine, but the Earth-Goddess who had entered the body of Kwengong pointed a bunch of soft feathers (attached on a light bamboo stick) at the fon and the fon died. The image of liquid is portrayed by the playwright as poisonous: the fon deadens his people with alcohol, and the fon is supposed to be killed by urine. It is a beautiful symmetry portraying poetic justice.

After the death of the fon, the people declared their new policy, which was that the land would no longer be ruled by fons. A ruler would be democratically elected and the affairs of the land would be debated in the market Square. To emphasize his message, the palm-wine tapper beat a musical instrument in the shape of elephant tusks tied together and made out of steel. He walked slowly among the audience and directed questions to them. Here is a dialogue between the audience and the tapper:

Tapper [Beats the musical instrument] The people of Ewawa! As the sun rises at dawn, so shall we all meet in the market place to decide on the destiny of this land. The people of Ewawa have you heard?

Audience Yes. We have heard oh oh oh oh!

Tapper [Beats the musical instrument] No more shall we allow one person to rule our land for us. The people of Ewawa, have you heard?

Audience Yes we have heard oh oh oh!

Tapper [Beats the musical instrument] From this moment palm-wine shall no longer flow in the land of Ewawa. It shall be used sparingly in libations to the gods and ancestors. The people of Ewawa, have you heard?

Audience Yes. We have heard oh oh oh!

This strategy of involving the audience in the performance had two consequences. First, it enabled the audience to absorb this particular message. Secondly, it made every member of the audience feel individually involved in the performance and helped them to identify personally with words of the tapper's song. It was a great opportunity for the people who had no political and economic power to express their feelings towards the government in this way. The audience was fully aware of the presence of the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and his friends in the audience. This Minister was responsible for the interests of the majority of the population, namely the farmers. The audience reacted as though they thought that collectively they were echoing the wishes of the large majority of the population. Thus there were shouts of applause as the audience echoed 'yes we have heard oh oh oh!' The audience, like the actors on stage and the playwright, wanted the Honourable Minister of Agriculture to understand the feelings of the people, and perhaps discuss this issue with his superior in the government. In a community where dialogue did not exist between the people and the

leader, and where the people did not have access to other forms of media such as newspaper, radio, television or industrial action as a means of opposing government's policy, theatre therefore became the medium of expression in the political arena.

To return to the performance, the death of the fon meant that the Ewawians would rid themselves of the evil of political imprisonment, physical and mental torture, and murder. Furthermore, the wealth of the country would belong to the entire country and not to the fon and his consanguineous relatives and friends. People would not be able to use money and gifts to purchase government posts. Every citizen would now have equal rights, responsibilities and privileges. The country would henceforth be administered by a meritocratic government, and social contentment, economic progress and political stability would prevail.

Butake, the playwright holds the view that a leader has power only if he is supported by the people and loses power when the people withdraw their support. Moreover, although the fon claimed to be very powerful, he was still a human being and was vulnerable to human predicaments such as degradation and a painful death. In a similar manner, Bole Butake's The Lake God, shows how the people of Nyos decide to assassinate their fon who was very uncaring and indifferent towards the people of Nyos.

The performance ended with the actors and actresses singing and dancing. The audience also chanted the song. The atmosphere was relaxed and hilarious.

As earlier indicated, the playwright, director, producer, actors and actresses blended comic relief and serious scenes. After all, the primary role of theatre is to entertain while the secondary function is to deliver messages. This performance, in which political messages were emphasized, was enacted in such a way that the audience could not avoid being drawn into the action. The audience clapped, chanted songs and answered questions posed by the actors on stage. The audience was happy, because the play probed the lives of the middle-class citizens, in particular the lives of the top government officials and political leaders. It laid bare the hypocrisies and corruption in those individuals popularly held to be the moral pillars of the society.

After the performance, Eyoh (the consultant director of the play) pleaded with the audience to remain in their seats whilst the guests of honour led by the Honourable

Minister of Agriculture congratulated the performers. The audience expected the Minister to make a remark about the performance because he was the guest of honour, but he did not. Instead, he grinned slyly. His countenance expressed a mixture of sadness and anger. He noted with dismay that the Yaounde University Theatre Troupe did not only entertain him, but implicitly abused him and the government. The Honourable Minister of Agriculture and his friends left the hall sadder and perhaps displeased but they had learnt about the wishes of the people.

Because the play was produced and performed during the period (1990-1) when political instability and the leadership crisis were at an apex, a significant number of the audience asserted that the play described the realistic social, economic and political issues in the country, and some of them maintained that it would have been preferable if Butake did not predict a solution to the leadership crisis in Cameroon. Some members of the audience wanted the playwright to end the play with a suspense so that they themselves could discuss and speculate about the future. Others said they did not want the fon to die. Some said the people should have exiled the fon, whilst others said the fon would have been dethroned. No one expressed any admiration for the fon. These various opinions indicated that Cameroonians did not want an oppressive leader, but that different methods were suggested as to how to rid the country of one. The audience, like many Cameroonians, expressed a desire for a leader to enter into dialogue with the people. Also, this audience, was open-minded about who should be their leader, as long as he looked after the people and protected the interests of the community.

During the first performance of this play, the hall resembled a political meeting. The performers' actions could be compared with a politician standing on a platform and addressing an audience consisting of loyalists and rebels (government supporters and non government supporters). Both camps enjoyed the scenes which were mainly theatrical. This shows that theatre can at the same time transcend as well as embody politics. It has the capacity to unite people of opposing camps through the power of performance and entertainment. We noted in chapter one that each of the Bima villages was mainly concerned with its own problems, but village performing artists looked at

problems beyond village level politics, and addressed the problems of the entire Bima region.

This performance, however, was not merely a piece of theatre; it seemed to be a call for mass demonstration by unravelling the shortcoming of the government. The audience's response showed that it wanted a leader who advocated for people's participation in decision-making and greater openness in the political life which might in turn promote social justice.

I watched the second performance of Bole Butake's And Palm-Wine Will Flow in early 1991 at the British Council in Yaounde. The play was performed by the Yaounde University Troupe. The hall had a capacity of three hundred spectators, and on this occasion all the seats were occupied. There was no stage in the British council hall, thus the performance was not very good and this affected the audience's response. Secondly, top government officials such as the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and his friends were not invited to watch the second performance. This also affected the actors' and actresses' performances. For example, the performers did not stress certain aspects of the performance, and they did not try to get the audience involved nor did they pose questions directly to the audience. All these factors affected the audience's response. Despite the differences, the audience expressed discontentment with a leader who suppressed his people and it came to the conclusion that the performance was actually describing the political realities in the country. A lecturer in the University of Yaounde who watched the second performance made several comments. He said the leader should not confuse debate for insult, difference of opinion for enmity, opposition for danger. The Leader should not harass a person because of his opinions and beliefs so long as they were constructive. The leader and the people should have the common duty to safeguard acts which promote the interests of the community.

On the whole, the two performances produced different results. This was caused by the nature of the audience as well as the presence or absence of prominent personalities in the audience. The greater success of the first performance compared with the second was due in part to the nature of the auditoriums in which they were performed. But perhaps more importantly, it was due to the presence of a government minister. It was as though the performance gained a power through the change of

political tension generated by the expression of potentially subversive messages in the presence of the ruling elite.

In And Palm-Wine Will Flow, Butake uses the image of village conflicts between the ruler and the people to depict how an irresponsible leader transforms his people into robots in that they cannot criticise their leader's imprudent policies. This situation retards the community's progress. In this play, Butake predicts that the time will come when even a leader's praise singers will abandon him and seek a meritorious government. During an interview with Bole Butake, he asserted that the play was not about contemporary Cameroon. He emphasized that the play was about a village conflict, but was surprised that the audience thought that the play had described the country's contemporary socio-economic and political issues. Perhaps he understood just too well that he was using the stage as an aegis to articulate his political opinions as well as to stimulate the audience to express political opinions, but it was politically dangerous to admit it.

The second play I want to consider is Eyoh's The Magic Fruit. It depicts selfishness and discrimination, and also calls on Cameroonians to discard these vices. The play has features of melodrama - a mixture of drama and music (see Cuddon 1979: 387 - 389). The songs are didactic. They convey different messages: such as calling on the rich to share their wealth with the needy; requesting the present generation to give the young generation a chance so that they can create a brighter Cameroon; asking why citizens should be treated like orphans and what should be done in order to ensure that Cameroon prospers.

The Magic Fruit deals with four themes: first, the duties of a leader, second, the role of women in national development, third, the description of discrimination against Anglophones by Francophones, and lastly a call for moral uprightness. In this chapter, I am concerned with the duties of a ruler. The second theme is examined in chapter four, the third theme will be examined in chapter five and the last theme is discussed in chapter six.

The play was performed by Yaounde Children Collective Theatre Troupe (the troupe was made up of children between the ages of three and twelve) on Wednesday, 27th March 1991 during *Rencontre Théâtrales de Yaounde*, in a hall in the Yaounde

Hilton Hotel. The hall has four hundred seats. It has a stage but no dressing room. However, actors and actresses changed at one corner of the hall, and hopefully did not distract the attention of the audience. The stage property was simple. It consisted of a royal throne and ordinary chairs. Actresses sat in one section while actors sat in another section. The hall was full of parents, relatives and friends who wanted to see their children on stage. The audience which watched this play was made up of the middle class. A number of reasons account for this: YCCT was made up of middle-class children, the less well off class could not afford the entrance fee of one thousand frs; the people considered Yaounde Hilton Hotel a place for the rich; and lastly, the troupe used standard English which the uneducated could not properly understand and speak.

In this play, Eyoh draws our attention to the duties of a chief. He maintains that a chief who is callous towards the well-being of his people will be dethroned and the seat will be given to the person who looks after his people.

During an enthronement ceremony that was portrayed in the performance, the chief's uncle drew the chief's attention to a lengthy story about the fall of an irresponsible chief. The story went: A prosperous village existed until a terrible drought disrupted the people's life-style. The people starved. One day, some children played in the village square under a large buma tree that had a hole in it. Out of this hole came a very beautiful squirrel eating a nut. Because the children were very hungry and wanted the nut, they chased the squirrel but it ran back into the hole. Following the squirrel into the hole, they arrived in the land of the squirrels. They came to the place where the chief of the squirrels asked them what they wanted. They told him they were looking for food and he gave them some. But one sensible child asked if they could take food home for the others who were starving. The chief squirrel gave them a magic wand and told them that when they reached the village, they should assemble the villagers in the village square and then say seven times 'Magic fruit, oh fruit of the squirrel world, our people are hungry' and they would have food for everyone. The chief squirrel instructed them that after the first day, the magic wand should be kept in a special room for protection, and that it would provide the people with enough food for several years. One day, however, the village chief stole it. A medicine man was called to search for

the magic wand. He had subjected all the villagers to a test and then it came to the turn of the chief:

Uncle The Chief stood up, looked at everyone, and climbed on the swing. No sooner had the medicine man given the first push, then the Chief fell down broooooom! Everyone cried out that the medicine man had killed their Chief. Then suddenly rolling out of the Chief's pocket, was the magic fruit and sticking out of his shirt was the magic wand. The people collected their fruit and their wand and chased the Chief out of the village. Did everyone understand my story.

In this community, the people expected a chief to be responsible, generous, and to look after his people even at times of food shortages. The chief should not be like the people of Kuranko who believe that generosity is absurd during times of rice scarcity (Jackson 1982: 72).

Eyoh is concerned with the role of leader. In one of his plays, Munyenge he describes how a tyrant ruler oppresses his people to the extent that no one dares to point out his errors. In this performance the chief disguised himself as the Town Crier and through this means learnt that he was considered by his people to be an oppressive leader:

Ist Villager What is it again? Can't one have a full night's sleep in this village, without your silly gong summoning us?

Town Crier Why don't you ask the chief that question?

3rd Villager Hm! Ask the chief? You must be joking. We dare not. You know that. Who dare ask the chief any question? Even if he thought our complaint was justified, he would make us pay dearly, only for complaining.

1st villager If the matter concerns the chief, then let's stop complaining. He has his ears and eyes everywhere. I cannot even speak about him in the presence of my wife, because the next moment, he is reproaching me for talking about him.

After the performance of The Magic Fruit, the audience assembled in a bar where they drank and informally discussed the play. It was during this period that I listened to some of the interpretations of the performance. In this chapter, I am concerned with the audience's response to the scene that dealt with the role of a chief.

Although the members of the audience grasped the message of the play, they belonged to the middle class which was well off, and who were themselves not that different from the chief portrayed in the play. The reaction to this message was very ambivalent. On the one hand, they acknowledged that any leader who failed to look after his people should be dethroned. On the other hand, they found it difficult to contemplate getting rid of a corrupt chief in the manner suggested, since in some ways they identified themselves with him.

Eyoh and Butake believe that an irresponsible leader thwarts his people's happiness and their productive initiatives, and the playwrights also call on their respective audiences to get rid of such leaders.

The third play to be examined in this chapter is a play entitled Beasts of No Nation by Bate Besong. Bate Besong is a teacher in the government Bilingual High School, Molyko, Buea. He is a modernist, an aesthetician, a poet and a playwright. He also broadcasts regularly on Cameroon National Radio and expresses his literary views during the Literary Hour; a programme for artists to express socio-economic, political and cultural opinions. His views broadcast on National Radio have made him very popular, particularly among the most patriotic Cameroonians who are concerned with the development of Cameroon. His work dwells on Cameroon's contemporary social, economic, political and cultural issues, and the plight of Anglophone Cameroon.

Bate Besong's Beast of No Nation is set in a fictitious country called Ednuoay. The play deals with three main themes. First, it depicts the plight and the frustration of English-speaking Cameroonians in the light of the reunification between the former English and French Mandates; second, it dwells on human vices such as avarice, gluttony, extravagancy, embezzlement that combine to retard the country's development; and lastly, it describes a tyrannous leader who assassinates men of ideas, thus preventing them from contributing to the country's development. In this chapter, I am concerned with the last theme.

Beasts of No Nation was directed and produced by Bole Butake and the consultant director was Eyoh. The play was performed by Yaounde University Theatre at Amphi 700 during the Theatre Festival Week in Yaounde of 21st - 29th March 1991. The stage property was very simple. It consisted of a chair and three buckets used in

carrying excrement. The buckets were skilfully fitted into planks designed in the shape of stools where people could sit and defecate. There were five actors and three actresses. Because Bate Besong's radical critical views on Cameroon's contemporary issues were frequently broadcasted over the National Radio, the auditorium was full. Many people wanted to watch one of his literary works on stage. Amphi 700 was designed to hold seven hundred persons, but on this occasion, it was too small for the number of people who turned up to watch the play. Some members of the audience stood at the very back of the auditorium, others stood on both sides of the auditorium whilst those who could not enter the hall watched the performance through the windows.

In this play, Bate Besong portrays the leader, Aadingingin, of the land of Ednuoay as spendthrift.

Aadingingin said he has billions of Cameroonian francs (CFA) and that he would take his family to Europe:

Aadingingin [Alone on stage] I have billions [of Cameroon C.F.A]. Ha ha ha ha. I will spend it on my family. We would spend the holidays in Europe.

This declaration provoked several responses from the audience. Some asked how the country could come out of the economic crisis and progress when the leader had all the money and then spent it in Europe. They added that with the attitude of the leader, the economic crisis would deepen further and further. Others actually believed that Aadingingin was indeed President Biya. This belief was consolidated with the fact that the person who enacted the role of Aadingingin had President Biya's features, such as broad face and brown-skinned. The choice of parts therefore strengthened the audience's belief that Aadingingin was Biya.

Aadingingin was also portrayed as some one who did not want any political opposition, who annihilated or incarcerated people who opposed his policies. In the land of Ednuoay thinkers were murdered and chopped into pieces, since it was a land where thinking was prohibited. Indeed, even the narrator was threatened by the voice of Aadingingin:

Voice of Aadingingin I'll order torture without regret [perhaps because the victim is innocent]. You will be held in solitary. Your cell will be flooded

with water. You will be deprived of food and sleep. You will be beaten and forced to drink your own urine. You will be put in a torture chamber. The machine will go into full swing. They will chain your hands and feet and drag you on the floor. Bottles will be broken on your head.

Narrator (Expansively) Now, what are you trying to suggest to me that I did not know. Since some were chopped to pieces by machetes, after the soldiers had done their duties and wiped out the dreamers.

The image of the authoritative leader was lucidly portrayed in this dialogue. Thinkers were murdered by soldiers for the purpose of preventing them from examining and criticising Aadingingin's policies. Bate Besong believes that a good leader should allow people to criticise a regime. People should not be harassed or murdered because of their opinions and ideas.

Aadingingin's right-hand man Otshama informed him that the Nightsoil-men (Anglophones) wanted their identity cards. Aadingingin said the economic crisis had ruined the economy and the country's little wealth was hardly enough for himself. Aadingingin gave Otshama an envelope which contained money and made Otshama promised that he would stop nightsoil-men from asking for identity cards. But before Aadingingin finished giving his instructions, the Nightsoil-men stormed in with buckets full of excrement; they wanted Aadingingin to give them identity cards. Instead of satisfying the nightsoil-men, Aadingingin used his gun to threaten them. The nightsoil-men pleaded with Aadingingin to spare their lives and they left the stage:

Otshama [comes to the stage and kneels besides Aadingingin]. The nightsoil-men have sent a deputation to Your Eminence [they want identity cards].

Aadingingin You are repeating yourself like a child. You know the crisis budget I have to work with. A mere c.f.a (Cameroon francs) 500 million. Now, I have already spent c.f.a. 350 million for toilet tissue, c.f.a 100 million for disinfections...

Nightsoil-men [Nightsoil-men come on stage] We want our identity card.



Picture Number 21. Shitologists, Narrator, lame man, and blind man in Beasts of No Nation.



Picture Number 22. Aadingingin threatens shitologists with his gun in Beasts of No Nation.

Aadingingin And you have come to me. (He whips out an automatic pistol and suddenly breaks into a laugh. His tone increases in intensity). You bastards I say. What is it you want from me, eh? I will break all the nightsoil buckets over your skulls.

At this point, when Aadingingin threatened nightsoil-men with his gun (see picture number 21), some French men who were members of the audience left the hall. The audience said loudly that 'People should not run away'. The performance ended with Aadigingin shooting Otshama, retrieving the money he had given him and asserting that 'My word is double law. I AM THE LAW' (see picture number 22). The leader's perception of power was clearly portrayed in this line. Aadingingin was a leader who believed that he had absolute power. Aadingingin was portrayed as some one who gave a bribe, retrieved the bribe and later assassinated his own people.

When Aadingingin shot Otshama [his right-hand man], the audience expressed mixed feelings. Some of them said that the play was real life enacted on stage, implying that the play was a piece of documentary theatre portraying reality. This assertion has some justification in the sense that in real life some people had openly suggested that the leader exploited them. A case in point was Eteki Mboumoua, a government officer who asserted that Biya 'used me and sacked me' (Cameroon Post, No 61, 14 - 21 March 1992).

During the performance of this play, many members of the audience were dreadfully scared, for they were experiencing a strange and new political vocabulary expressed vividly on stage. The actors and actresses on stage dragged the government through the mud and exposed it for all its shortcomings. The audience witnessed such vices as bribery, corruption, tribalism and political assassinations enacted openly on the stage. These were not things that Cameroonians, or to be more precise, Cameroon audiences were used to. These were things discussed quietly among friends or privately at mid-night when one was very confident that no one was listening, or were thought privately. Never, were such things expressed so explicitly.

The fact that this play was performed during the Cameroon Theatre Festival Week, and by The Yaounde University Troupe and also on the University premises, showed that 1990 and 1991 have been marked out as milestones of a new political era

in Cameroon Politics. During the regime of Late President Ahidjo, Beasts Of No Nation would have been banned and the playwright sent to jail. Secondly, the fact that this play was performed showed that theatre could not be divorced from politics, and playwrights could not avoid depicting the issues that characterised their respective periods. One of the concerns of this play was to depict Cameroonian contemporary politics.

After the performance, the troupe, the director of the play and the playwright were formally introduced to the audience. The playwright thanked the director, the actors and actresses who made his message reach the people. Bate Besong was aware of the fact that the script (Beasts Of No Nation) left on its own could not have conveyed the message. The director, producer, light manager, stage manager, and costume manager, actors and actresses had to transmit the message on stage to the audience. By performing the play, Bate Besong's primary motive for writing the play was fulfilled. Thus he heartily thanked the director and the troupe.

Having introduced the playwright, director and the troupe, the director of the play asked Bate Besong, the playwright, to make a remark about the performance. He reiterated the message in his play that the country was facing political and economic uncertainty. Thus the Cameroon people would have to make a choice of either supporting the deprived people or supporting a government which did not look after the people. Some members of the audience did not want such issues to be enacted on stage. They grinned maliciously and said the audience should remember that they were in theatre watching a play. Some members of the audience actually showed their anger with the issues raised in the play by leaving the hall before Bate Besong had finished his speech. The lights were switched off by some members of the audience. I do not know whether they were government loyalists or dissidents. However, whoever they were, they created an opportunity for people to speak openly of their feelings about the play, since they could not be identified in the dark. There were few police officers present, hence the audience freely expressed its views and the atmosphere was full of tension. Some of the audience's reactions are discussed in chapter five where another theme of Beasts of No Nation is fully examined.

On the whole, the Anglophone national performances portrayed the corruption of leadership and eventual betrayal of the people. These issues turned the prospects of national development into the certainty of perpetual economic recession. The performances depicted leaders as tyrants, murderers and so on; people who were obsessed with power. Beasts of No Nation ended with Aadigengin shooting one of his advisers, retrieving the money that he gave him and asserting that his word was double [absolute] law. And Palm-Wine Will Flow portrayed a tyrannous fon who murdered critics of his policies and seizes his subjects' property. Munyenge described a chief who tyrannized his people to the extent that no one dared to criticise his errors.

In Bole Butake's And Palm-Wine Will Flow and Bate Besong's Requiem Of The Last Kaiser, the playwrights maintain that the leaders must die in order to restore the people's intellectual and physical abilities. If these plays are truly reflecting the socio-economic and political activities in Cameroon, then these Anglophone national playwrights do not agree with the assertion made by some historians that:

President Biya has prepared himself academically for the dizzy height of Head of State. His studies in law and political science have enabled him to possess a breadth of vision and a very great understanding of human nature (Mbuagbaw et al 1990: 141).

Ahidjo (the former President of Cameroon) proclaimed in the early 1960s that he wanted a peaceful political milieu in Cameroon but the makiza (opposition Bamileke rebels in the Western Province) did not want peace. In order to maintain the peace of the country, he had to suppress the rebels (see Le Vine 1964: 190, 188). Many Cameroonians thought that Ahidjo was not a tyrant since he only used brutal acts on rebels so that ultimately peace could prevail in the country. From this point of view, they supported whatever means Ahidjo used to get rid of those who disturbed the peace of the country. Forje, like many Cameroonians, supported Ahidjo. He asserted that given the activities of the makiza, Ahidjo could not have avoided a suppressive regime if his primary goal was to maintain peace in the country (Forje 1981). The makiza were abolished during the era of Ahidjo. Hence in 1990 (when I watched the performances analysed in this thesis) there was no armed resistance in the country. Thus the violent suppression of certain groups of people was no longer justified. It is in this respect that theatre practitioners want leaders who will now look after the interests of their people

so that the country can advance. The various audiences observed also agreed that the people should get rid of irresponsible leaders so that the country could come out of the economic crisis. This would restore the health of the people who were teetering on the brink of the economic crisis.

3. B. POLITICAL LEADERS AND DEVELOPMENT IN FRANCOPHONE NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.

This section examines Abega's Sens Unique and Doho's Le Crâne, which were produced and performed by the National Troupe and the Théâtre Université respectively during the Theatre Festival Week of March 1991. These plays again portray leaders of their respective countries as tyrants, murderers and uncaring.

Abega's Sens Unique ('One Way') was enacted on Thursday, 21st March 1991 at The Cameroon National Congress Hall during the Cameroon Theatre Festival Week, Yaounde. The hall was designed to suit less elaborate productions. There was a platform and dressing rooms at both ends of the stage. The hall had a capacity of approximately one thousand seats. The stage property of this performance consisted of stools and benches.

Cameroon National Congress Hall was chosen as it was the most prestigious in the country. Also the play was the opening performance of theatre festival week and the government was represented by the Minister of Information and Culture who officially opened the occasion. Indeed, the venue was appropriate for the numerous dignitaries, top civil servants and foreign diplomats who were also invited to watch the performance. Given the importance of the venue, the fact that the National Troupe was managed by the arts department of the Ministry of Information and Culture, and prominence of the performance on the opening night of the festival, it was indeed a bold decision to stage Abega's controversial play. For Sens Unique attacked the west, the leaders and the elites in developing countries in an extravagant but subtle manner.

The main plot of Sens Unique is trade between two countries. The play is set in two fictitious worlds, the first Emo-Milang (the natural world), and the second Engunkang (the world of the spirits). The play is a mystical drama which pushes beyond the mundane into the invisible world. These two worlds have different ideologies, perspectives and languages, which keep them distinct, but they are brought together by trade. The terms of trade are in favour of Engunkang. The leader of Emo-Milang is named Mbutuku, a slang term in Pidgin English meaning 'naive and foolish'. Mbutuku represents Emo-Milang's agriculturists in the trade between his world and the

world of the spirits. The leader of Engunkang is simply referred to as First Ghost, and he and his followers are considered to be villains, liars and the embodiment of evil. So Mbutuku and First ghost are typical characters. The playwright has created individual characters but he also has formulated types. Mbutuku is not just a human being who trades with the spirits, he is a fool, and the ghosts are not merely spirits, but spirits who engage in a trade with the aim of exploiting Mbutuku the fool. Much of the action in the play takes place on the fringe of a forest near Emo-Milang, a place which the ghosts consider to be appropriate. The audience meets the inhabitants of the invisible world but are not taken to the spiritual world.

Mountains, hills, trees, grass and a valley were drawn as background to the stage. The stage property consisted of kenjas (traditional baskets used for carrying produce from the farms), a bench, a traditional house, calabashes which contained palm-wine, spears, drums, and a kerosene-lamp. The actors and actresses who played the role of the ghosts wore black trousers and T shirts, and occasionally tied long white cloths around their bodies. The actresses who played the role of Mbutuku's wives and mother wore long cabas (dresses with pleats at the top of the breasts. They were similar to maternity dresses). One of the farmers tied a loin cloth around his waist and wore a singlet, another farmer wore trousers and Mbutuku and another farmer wore loose trousers and shirts. The costumes corresponded with the role of the characters. The ghosts wore black and white, whilst the people of Emo-Milang wore Cameroon traditional costumes. Drummers sat at one corner of the stage and drums were beaten in some of the scenes. Natural sounds, such as the crow of birds, were also incorporated in the performance. All these combined to invoke the milieu of Cameroon.

The play is divided into five acts, and here is a summary of the five acts. In the first act Mbutuku (the leader of Emo-Milang) encounters the disabled ghosts (whose leader is First Ghost or *Ier revenant*). The ghosts are enacting a dance in the forest. This dance is called *la fête du donner et du recevoir* - the give and take festival. The ghosts do not want human beings to participate in the dance. However Mbutuku insists on participating in the trade. Because of his insistence, he receives a lame leg and becomes crippled in return for his cocoa, coffee, diamonds and gold. In act two Okokon (one of the ghosts and a supposed friend of Mbutuku) seizes Mbutuku's



Picture Number 23. Disabled ghosts led by blind ghost in a scene in Sens Unique.



Picture Number 24. Mbutuku is inflicted with a lame leg and a hump by the ghosts in Sens Unique.

wives. Act three describes the second encounter between the ghosts and Mbutuku. Mbutuku maintains that he is unjustly treated by the ghosts and dreads the actions of the farmers whose produce he has taken to sell. Hence he contemplates suicide. Act four describes Mbutuku's encounter with the farmers and people of Emo-Milang. Mbutuku relates his story, but the farmers do not believe a word of the story. They insist that Mbutuku should take them to the ghosts, so Mbutuku leads the way to the forest. In act five, the farmers are given a hearty welcome, and they have every reason to believe that Mbutuku is a liar. One of the farmers asks the ghosts to give him the most recent luxurious car in his country. Instead of receiving the car, the ghosts make him blind and the other farmer lame. First Ghost asks whether the farmers believe in equal trade between the two worlds (Emo-Milang and Engungang).

Sens Unique deals with three main themes; first, Mbutuku (a fool) the leader of Emo-Milang (developing country) who behaves like a numbskull and leads his country and his people in destruction; second, it depicts the identity of Emo-Milang, and thirdly, in developing countries, it shows the farmers' love of luxurious goods, a love which also retards progress in Emo-Milang. In this chapter I am concerned with the first theme; Mbutuku and his role in his country's development. The second theme is examined in chapter five, whilst the third theme is discussed in chapter six.

The performance began with the ghosts enacting a dance in a border forest near Emo-Milang. The dance was called *la fete du donner et du recevoir* (the festival of giving and taking; or trade). The spirits were dressed in black. Their faces were painted with calabachalk and they had a variety of deformities and disabilities (see picture number 23) - hunchbacks, cripples and blind ghosts. First Ghost ordered the rest to prepare the scene for the performance, to dance in pairs and in succession, but to remain invisible ³. They accepted his advice but maintained that in spite of their respective disabilities, they wished to prove their theatrical skill in the arena:

1er revenant Vous vous mettrez là-bas, et devrez rester invisibles.

Le boiteux Mais très bien. Ce n'est pas parce qu'on a une jambe plus molle ou plus aide qu' une autre qu' on ne peut pas danser. Regarde un peu!

Le bossu Ah mais! Ne pensez pas que cette gibosité peser. (Lui aussi commence à se trémousser).

L' aveugle Moi j'ai tous membres, même si j'ai perdu la vue.

1er revenant recites the lyric songs and the rest who make up the chorus respond. One of the songs goes:

1er revenant ...krrrt! adjimbe!

Choeur Hè!

1er revenant Nekanda-nya!

Choeur Nya (boeuf)

1er revenant Susulite! (société)

Choeur Envoyez

1er revenant Pok! ba! lal! na! bdə a səksə ayob! (un, deux, trois, quatre, cinq, haut les tutus) Tous ensemble: La ta dzok ləæj le ntson tit le ta ndem a opəp ndemək, ndəm opəp [language of the ghosts].

The audience clapped and laughed, and also applauded for each disabled dancer who excelled in his or her particular style; the atmosphere was hilarious. Also from their different demonstrations, it was apparent that although the ghosts were disabled, they enjoyed themselves. We noted in chapter one that the Megang group which was made up of 'lepers' engaged in music and dance. Here, the disabled ghost engaged in theatre. The Megang group and Abega are asserting that disabled people can enjoy themselves just as much as normal able-bodied people.

Each of the dancers had his/her own song. These songs were intelligible only to the performers, giving the impression that ghosts were distinct from human beings. Each dancer performed according to his/her disability. A blind ghost danced by shaking his legs, shoulders and feet, and used his staff to find his way. A lame ghost demonstrated with his hands and expressed himself or herself through facial expression, and a hunchback demonstrated with his legs although he was slightly bent over. This implied that within the group, each disabled person lived in his own separate world. In other words the spirits lived in pluralistic worlds which were brought together through a common language, perspective and a search for development (through trade with Emo-Milang).

Scene two began with Mbutuku arriving at the scene of the dance. Mbutuku was astonished with the elegance of the dance and exclaimed:

Mbutuku C'est merveilleux! La dance de revenants est aussi belle...

Mbutuku joined the dancers, but danced with the right foot instead of the left foot. His style embarrassed the ghosts who danced with their left feet. At this juncture the audience was anxious to watch the reaction of the ghosts. The anxiety was short-lived. 1er revenant the commented:

1er revenant Bas à celui qui danse à sa droit. Attention, un homme.

The ghosts did not want human beings to participate in their activities, and they considered Mbutuku an intruder. However, although the ghosts detested Mbutuku's intrusion they had also intruded into the world of human beings. Therefore both Mbutuku and the ghosts were intruders but in different ways. The ghosts showed their disapproval by moving away from Mbutuku. At a certain point they stopped dancing and silently watched Mbutuku. Mbutuku did not understand why the dancers had stopped dancing and did not intend to disturb the dancers. However, he did not take the trouble to find out why the ghosts detested his presence, and thus he insisted that they should continue with the dance.

Following Mbutuku's intrusion, the ghosts compelled him to disclose his identity and give reasons for disrupting their dance. Mbutuku revealed his identity and added that his mission was to participate in the give and take trade. The dancers warned that membership was restricted to the ghosts, and advised Mbutuku to return to his own land. Mbutuku refused to heed to their advice. Rather, he emphasised that he must participate in the festival. Having listened to Mbutuku's vow, the leader said it was an unfortunate hour for Mbutuku who had stubbornly refused to listen to their advice.

Mbutuku participated in the dance and also drew the ghosts' attention to the precious commodities (cocoa, coffee, groundnuts, gold and diamonds) he brought to exchange for Engunkang's goods. The ghosts, who did not want human beings to interrupt their affairs, curtly replied that his produce was irrelevant:

Mbutuku Mais attends! J'ai amené là. J'ai sur la rive de l'Endama une
pirogue pleine des richesses les plus précieuses d' Emo-Milang.

1er revenant C' est sans intérêt pour nous. Où sont les musiciens?

If it was true that the ghosts were not interested in Mbutuku's produce they would have remained in their world and not performed their dance in a border forest

near the human world. Therefore, although the ghosts feigned to abhor Mbutuku's presence, their decision to enact the dance in a forest near Emo-Milang indicated that they intended to include human beings in the trade. Thus the line of demarcation which they were vigorously trying to impose was a pretence, since the two worlds have been connected for economic reasons; indeed the ghosts needed Emo-Milang agricultural produce and Mbutuku needed Engunkang's manufactured goods.

Mbutuku's insistence on participating in the dance resulted in a lame ghost feigning friendship by starting a conversation. During the conversation, the lame ghost asked if Mbutuku could lend him one of his legs to enable him dance well. So Mbutuku lent the leg, expecting it to be returned after the dance. Unfortunately, the lame ghost had no intention of returning it. When the cock crew signalling dawn - the time when the ghosts returned to their world - some of them, including the lame ghost, disappeared as the first rays of sunlight appeared. (This reference to the cock crew was evocative of the vivid Biblical scene of the trial of Christ, one which also portrayed human weakness). Mbutuku wanted his leg, but one of the ghosts reminded him of his insistence on participating in the dance. The ghost added that he had received a bad leg in exchange for his produce (cocoa, coffee, groundnuts, gold and diamonds) which was in accordance with the terms of trade:

Mbutuku ...Que se passe-t-il?

Un danseur N'as-tu pas entendu le coq? Bientôt il fera jour. Nous devons-nous retirer. La lumière ne doit pas nous surprendre.

Mbutuku ...Il y a quelqu'un qui est venu. Il m'a demandé de lui prêter ma jambe, afin, qu'il aille danser. Maintenant, tout le monde est parti, et je ne le vois plus.

1er revenant Tu est bien venu à notre fête du donner et du recevoir, d' après ce que tu m'as dit.

Mbutuku Mais je n'ai rien reçu en échange!

1er revenant Comment cela rien? Et cette jambe que voilà?

Mbutuku Quoi? De l'or, des diamants, du café, de l'arachide pour une jambe malade?

At this juncture when Mbutuku exchanged his produce for a lame leg, the audience was very silent, and this silence was only interrupted by sighs here and there. This meant that the audience pitied Mbutuku.

This trade obviously favoured the ghosts and was definitely disadvantageous to Mbutuku. This type of trade left Mbutuku absolutely destitute as well as physically disabled, whilst the ghosts became physically fit and economically richer. The *fête du donner et du recevoir* had two layers. Superficially, it was an attractive dance. In depth, it was a trade which destroyed partners such as Mbutuku and his country.

Mbutuku soliloquized over his misfortune. In anger and frustration, he abused the ghosts. He regretted that he partook in the feast and pondered over what the farmers, whose produce he took to Engunkang, would say. Mbutuku believed that immediately he set foot again in Emo-Milang, the farmers would crowd round him like bees round a honey pot demanding their money and an explanation for why he had stayed longer in Engunkang than expected. Because he was scared of the villagers' negative reactions, he contemplated suicide:

Mbutuku Des escrocs, des voleurs, des menteurs...Ils m'ont volé ma jambe et tous mes biens, mon arachide, mon cocoa, mon café, mon or, mon diamants... Au mieux je passerai par l'ordalie du poison. Au pire, on me lynchera...Je sens déjà mon cou....Que faire? Où me réfugier? A qui demande secours?

Again Mbutuku revealed his cowardice. He could not face the issues he had created, rather, he contemplated suicide. The playwright is not merely revealing Mbutuku's character but he is also presenting us with a stereotypical individual.

At the end of this act, there was darkness on the stage accompanied by the ghost's music. The intention was to prepare the stage for a subsequent scene. But this device turned out to be valuable in another way as it created an opportunity for the audience to comment about the performance. Some spectators sighed and showed sympathy for Mbutuku. Some members of the audience said 'Pauvre Mbutuku'. Others said 'Pourquoi il entre la danse de fantômes'. The audience was divided.

Okokon (a small ghost and Mbutuku's supposed friend) and Mbutuku had established an agreement whereby they would carry out a hunting expedition.

According to the agreement, Mbutuku would receive all the male animals while Okokon would receive all the female animals. The two carried out the hunting expedition and only male animals were caught; thus Mbutuku took all the animals. Okokon was determined to get his own back.

Okokon met Mbutuku and his three wives. He wanted to take his revenge and he believed that females were females; be they human beings or animals. Hence Okokon invited Mbutuku's wives to visit Engunkang, and promised that it was a splendid, peaceful land where human beings had all they desired in abundance. Thus the women followed Okokon to the ghosts' world, and since Mbutuku did not want to leave his wives, he decided to follow the ghosts as well:

Mbutuku Je repars tout de suite à Engunkang, le chien. Attends-moi. Je te retrouverai.

Mbutuku met the ghosts in the forest. He saw his wives and pleaded that they should return to Emo-Milang. But they refused to listen to him. The women's attitude put him into a furious rage. The ghost had a stereotyped image about Mbutuku, thus Mbutuku's revelation of an aspect of his character led the ghosts to accuse him of been a murderer, liar, violator of democratic principles and an irresponsible ruler. First Ghost asked Mbutuku the number of males he had killed and eaten. Mbutuku thought that the First Ghost was referring to male animals he hunted:

Mbutuku (Fou de rage) Je ne te laisserai pas mes femmes. Je les ramène...

1er revenant Attendez! Attendez un instant. Que vous arrive-t-il donc? Allez-vous agir comme des brutes, comme des sauvages, céder à vos impulsions, à la colère, alors que nous sommes une société civilisée? Que faites-vous de toute cette police que nous avons réussi à imposer à nos moeurs? Que faites-vous du droit? Allons, un peu de pondération, Monsieur. Calmons nos nerfs, et laissons le droit reprendre sa place parmi nous afin que lui seul règle ce que je considère comme un malendu et combien de mâles aviez-vous gagnés avant celà?

Mbutuku Soixante.

1er revenant Et qu'en avez-vous fait?

Mbutuku Je les ai mangé!

At this point when Mbutuku admitted the number of males he had killed and eaten, the audience jeered. Like Okokon, the audience thought that it was irrelevant whether the males were human beings or animals. The performers on stage and the audience played on the word *male*. Perhaps the audience thought a man who could kill and eat sixty animals could also be a cannibal, greedy and avaricious. The sympathy that the audience showed towards Mbutuku at the beginning of the play started disappearing.

All the ghosts assembled to act as a jury in the case between the prosecutor (Mbutuku) and accused (Okokon). It should be remembered that Mbutuku had taken Okokon to 'court' because the latter seized the former's wives. However, with Mbutuku's revelation (of his cannibalism) still fresh in the ghosts' minds, they, like the audience, maintained that Mbutuku had undermined the sympathy which his supporters would have shown. The ghosts enquired from Mbutuku's wives whether they would prefer to return to Emo-Milang or to remain in Engunkang. The women exacerbated Mbutuku's situation by claiming that they had never seen him before. The verdict went in favour of Okokon, and Mbutuku was dumbfounded. He exclaimed:

Mbutuku *Donc il a gagné?...Je deviens fou?...Je rêve! Dis-moi que je rêve.*

After the jury has given its verdict about the case, Mbutuku remained to chat with hunchback. In the course of the conversation, he confided in the hunchback that he has accepted the unequal trade between Engunkang and Emo-Milang:

Mbutuku *Je commence à me dire que j'aurais dû accepter cette proposition, bien qu'elle soit inique.*

Members of the audience were angry at this point when Mbutuku said, in spite of the unfair terms of trade he would continue. They made a literal interpretation of the play. They said it was due to his foolishness that the roads were untarred, yet they were tax payers. They listed a host of problems in the country and said they did not want cars, mansions and European dresses. All they wanted were good roads, good medical facilities, shelter and food.

Mbutuku's acceptance of the worsening terms of trade between Emo-Milang and Engunkang confirmed that the two countries were old partners in trade, and also confirmed Griffin's assertion that international trade first created underdevelopment (in

developing countries) and then hindered efforts for developing countries to escape (Griffin cited in Keesing 1981: 444). However, according to the playwright, developing countries can easily escape from the grips of the unequal trade, but they, like Mbutuku have accepted the terms of trade.

The playwright is also informing the audience that developing countries have accepted their fate. If this is the message, then the underdevelopment of developing countries will deepen further and further.

Mbutuku's assertion that he had accepted the terms of trade challenged the audience's sensibilities and conceptions. The performance was intended to motivate the audience to distinguish and also choose between development and underdevelopment.

It is worth noting that besides portraying Mbutuku as a fool and a cannibal, the playwright also portrays him as unscrupulous.

Mbutuku confided in the hunchback and also added that he envied him and would prefer to become disabled for the sake of his people so that they should not live in misery. He failed to realise that the hunchback would gladly get rid of his disability if he found some one who was willing to accept it. Hence, he did not hesitate to give the affliction to Mbutuku:

Le bossu Moi, je porte ma bosse depuis le jour de ma naissance, et je mourrai avec [ça].

Mbutuku Je préférerais mille fois être bossu.

Le bossu C'est vrai?

Mbutuku Si tu savais combien je peux t'envier en cette minute.

Le bossu (Touche sa gibosité, et frappe le dos de Mbutuku)
Alors, prends-là!

When Mbutuku realised that he was inflicted with a hump, he pleaded with the hunchback to take it away. He maintained that he was merely joking. It was too late and Mbutuku must add this disability to his previous one (see picture number 24). The hunchback rebuked him for lying and disappeared when the cock crew the third time. Mbutuku had not only lost his precious produce, his healthy legs and his wives; he also now had a hunch back.

Having inflicted Mbutuku with such disabilities, the ghosts insisted that disabled people should not participate in *la fête du donner et du recevoir*:

Le boiteux Chasse cet homme. Ne le laissez pas se mêler au cercle des danseurs.

Nous n'admettons pas les éclopés ici.

The manner in which the hunchback drove Mbutuku out caused commotion among the audience, and also divided it into factions. Some spectators jeered at the ghosts, others applauded, some remained mute and others left the hall. The faction of the audience which jeered at the ghosts was not in favour of the ghosts' attitude towards Mbutuku. Those who applauded were indeed asserting that Mbutuku deserved his punishment because he had not taken pains to analyse the motives of the ghosts. Those who remained mute were the top government officers who watched the play. Perhaps they thought that the performance exaggerated Mbutuku's foolishness for the purpose of getting the message across to the people. Those who left the audience identified themselves with the ghosts. They were Europeans who thought that the ghosts in the play represented Europeans.

During an interview in January 1993, the playwright maintained that the play was first performed in Capitol Cinema in Yaounde. He added that during the performance Frenchmen who were in the auditorium had also left the hall. He asserted that when he later visited Paris, one of the Frenchmen who had watched the play in Yaounde proclaimed on the television that he, Abega (the playwright), was a racist.

At this juncture in the performance when the ghosts insisted that disabled people did not participate in trade, the relationship between the ghosts and Mbutuku was similar to that of birds and the fig tree. Birds abandon a fig tree after they have stripped it of its riches. Perhaps the playwright is informing the leaders of developing countries that the West will abandon them after the former has sapped the latter's natural, economic and human resources ⁴. In this play, Abega shows how an unscrupulous, uncaring ruler leads himself and his country to destruction.

The theatrical skill of the actors and actresses strengthened this message thereby inspired the audience to respond in various ways. We have already noted that the audience was divided into factions. Some loved the message but others did not. The play was very controversial and it inspired different responses.

This theme about the role of a leader in his country's development which was portrayed in this performance transcended the problem of underdevelopment in Cameroon. The theme exploited how selfish anti-nationalist leaders in developing countries could not analyse the motives of their European peers, as well as how the impact of unequal trade between developed and developing countries ruined the prospects of development in their countries.

Abega's intention of including this theme in the play is to uncover one of the factors that is promoting national underdevelopment in Cameroon. The theme is also aimed at pricking the conscience of the leaders of developing countries and the rulers of developed countries. The playwright informs the people of developing countries that there is no doubt that the unequal trade between developed countries and developing countries is creating enormous poverty in developing countries. However, the rulers of developing countries are unscrupulous in their dealing with their peers in Europe. Due to this fact, they plunge their countries deeper into poverty.

The playwright uses symbolic characters - ghosts (which have supernatural powers, evil intentions and which cannot be trusted) to represent the inhabitants of developed countries, and Mbutuku (a fool) to represent leaders of developing countries. He also uses the images of physical disabilities, such as hunchback and lame ghost to represent psychical, moral and physical destructions. For example, after the ghosts had deformed Mbutuku, the former stopped the latter from participating in the dance of *la fête du donner et recevoir*. Perhaps the playwright is informing the audience that developing countries' leaders strip the pride and personalities of their peers in developed countries, then the former deals with the latter on unequal terms. On the whole, the playwright uses symbols (ghosts and Mbutuku) to depict political, economic and social issues in Cameroon. Through this subtle style, the government cannot attack him for subversion. In spite of the subtle style used by the playwright, he maintained during an interview in January 1993, that after the first performance of this play, well-wishers visited his house for the purpose of ensuring that he had not been taken to a police cell and tortured.

In terms of the audience response to the play, it was intellectually positive. Members of the audience were pleased with the message of the performance. Although,

the playwright described trade between Emo-Milang and Engunkang, the audience understood that the play was about trade between developed and developing countries - particularly Cameroon. Thus some members of the audience associated Mbutuku's actions with those of leaders of developing countries, and in particular with Cameroon's leaders. As a result, during and after the performance they interpreted the play in different ways. Some of the interpretations are listed in this chapter and others feature in chapters five and six where other prominent themes of this play are examined.

Some members of the audience agreed that Mbutuku's cowardly behaviour encouraged the ghosts to dupe him into losing all his valuables. Others said that if the terms of trade were worse then it was unreasonable for developing countries to trade with developed countries. But then what would become of their cash crops? Others in the audience accepted that trade between the West and Cameroon was conducted on unequal terms, but that theatre exaggerated the issue. Yet others blamed a ruler who over estimated his natural resources, and thus attracted foreign exploitation. The Minister of Information and Culture, who represented the government, congratulated all the theatre practitioners (playwright, director, producer, performers and others) who contributed in making the performance. However, he said there was no doubt that the performance portrayed elements of truth, but added that if Mbutuku was as stupid as he was portrayed in the performance and if the terms of trade were as bad as they were depicted in the performance, then Mbutuku must re-examine his character and Emo-Milang must reconsider its terms of trade, think wisely and act quickly. The audience responded with mock approval.

I have already indicated that some members of the audience were very angry at the point where Mbutuku said in spite of the unfair terms of trade, he would continue. They said they wanted good roads, medical facilities, shelter and food. Some members of the audience considered development in terms of the availability of shelter, food, health care, education and transport facilities. The response of the audience indicted that the message of the performance was understood by a vast majority of the audience.

The second Francophone national performance examined in this chapter is Doho's Le Crâne. The play was written and produced at the time when Cameroon was

facing the most major change in its political history since it attained independence in 1960. The play was performed by Théâtre Université at Amphi 700 at the Faculty of Law, the University of Yaounde on the 27 March 1991, during the Theatre Festival Week of 1991. The stage property consisted of benches, a traditional royal throne covered with animal skins. The fauna and flora of the grassland region were beautifully and stylishly drawn on the walls of the platform.

The play is set in Tatou village. The characters include Tatang and Desou (the late leader's sons) Kwetse and Fodabnet (the friends of Desou who are banned from the palace), Ngne-Douni (a father in-law to Tatang and also the eldest person in the village), Mafo (Tatang's wife and Ngne-Douni's daughter), Maiak (Desou's mother), Ngnouala (Tatang's chief servant), Desop, Fosop (Desou's friends), and the villagers.

In Tatou village, succession is both hereditary and elective. Also, when a leader dies the corpse is embalmed for a couple of weeks and, on the date of the burial, the skull is cut from the trunk of the corpse and placed in a skull shrine among the skulls of previous ancestors. A potential successor (who is supported by the villagers) must possess the late leader's skull prior to succeeding his father. In the absence of a potential successor, the villagers choose a successor from the late leader's children on the day of the funeral. During the installation ceremony the successor is endowed with mystical powers, and thus is elevated to the status of a god. The installation ceremony is very symbolic in the sense that it confirms the people's consensus acknowledgement of the ruler's position, which cannot be repudiated by any member of the community. After the funeral and installation, the people look to the new leader for protection. He must promote economic progress, social contentment and political stability.

The play is a political satire centred around the choice of a successor to a late chief's throne. Tatang, the late leader's son wants to become a leader irrespective of the wishes of the people. He refuses to listen to the people and also to negotiate with his political rivals, particularly his brother Desou. His actions create economic stagnation in the village. Also, Desou who has been in exile is supported by many elders who are watching over the late leader's corpse. It would appear that he has charge over the late leader's corpse, whilst Tatang is occupying the throne. Thus there is a political conflict, but the conflict is between Tatang and the villagers (headed by Ngne-Douni) who

support Desou and want to restore peace in the village. However, neither Tatang nor Desou is elected to succeed the late leader. Rather, the late leader's skull falls in the hands of a peasant and he becomes the village chief.

Le Crâne deals with two main issues: first, a stubborn leader who creates economic stagnation and political instability in his country and second, the role of women during political turmoil. This chapter examines the first theme whilst the second is discussed in chapter four.

The performance began with three guards keeping watch over the throne. The guards were dressed in military costumes and each was holding a long spear in both hands. Tatang entered the palace in a state of agitation because he considered himself a usurper, and thus felt threatened. He loved the throne so much that he claimed ownership of the throne. In this respect, he would not hesitate to carry out the most inhuman act for the purpose of protecting the throne:

Tatang Ngouala, Ngouala, Mon trône...Ah le voilà...Tu es mon bien, ma chose, ma propriété. Je ne me séparerai de toi...O mon trône, ma propriété, mon peuple!...Je me battraï, je me défendraï, je tueraï...(Echo très amplifié de sa voix). Gardes, gardes à moi. Oui là, à moi, protégez votre souverain. Ecrasez tous ceux qui veulent son trône. Là tout autour de moi. Ne leur laisser aucune chance. Emêchez-les; arrêtez-les; massacrez-les (Echo d'une voix qui n'est entendu que par Tatang).

This first scene was very spectacular. The bodyguards' costumes and Tatang's costume, a royal dazzling gown, complemented a beautiful set. Also, Tatang's evocative voice and his portrayal of charismatic qualities forced the audience to applaud in spite of his appalling character. Indeed the audience was impressed and applauded for over two minutes. This meant that although the audience did not want a self-imposed, selfish leaders, they admired a leader who demonstrated charismatic qualities.

As Tatang was giving instructions a voice behind the curtains warned that the throne did not belong to him. It was the villagers' property:

La Voix Le trône que tu réclames, c'est la propriété du peuple. Ce trône n'est pas à toi.

Amongst other historical facts, Ngne-Douni (the father of Mafo and the eldest councillor in the village) reiterated two important facts. First, the people had always chosen their own leader and participated in making major political and economic decisions in the village. Secondly, they had never accepted a self-appointed leader. He summed up by emphasizing that the villagers had never allowed their future to be decided by one person. This brings us back to the performance of And Palm-Wine Will Flow where the Ewawaians asserted that the people of Ewawa would never allow one person to rule the village. Major decisions affecting the welfare of the village would be decided by a council made up of elders. In the case of Tatou village, the community has been practising 'direct democracy' (a system in which all concerned citizens participated in the government). However, Tatang intended to reverse these long standing principles. This was where the heart of the conflict lay.

In desperation, anger and frustration, Tatang called for Mafo, (his first wife). He wanted her support during this period of political tumult. He accused her of avoiding him but she rejected his accusation, and instead she accused him of ignoring her presence. He apologised and added that he had been very occupied recently because the people would choose a leader to occupy his late father's throne. He added that ever since the tam-tam announced the date of the late leader's funeral, he had had sleepless nights. When the light was switched off, he stayed awake in bed thinking of what might happen if one of his brothers was chosen to succeed his father:

Tatang Mafo, depuis que les tam-tams dans ce bois sacré annoncent le jour du
transfert du crâne de mon père, je ne ferme plus les yeux pendant la
nuit.

Tatang was greatly disturbed because he might not be chosen by the people. But Mafo disapproved of his behaviour and said he should mourn his late father instead of trying to occupy the throne without the people's consent. Above all, he was the unloved son.

In this polygamous society, each of the leader's wives endeavours zealously to win the love of her husband and the community. One of the reasons is to ensure that her son is chosen to succeed his father. It should be noted that the villagers are very instrumental in choosing a ruler. In this respect, although the people respect and obey the royals, the latter have a duty of showing kindness to the people and also

demonstrating a sense of good judgement. The relationship between the ruled and the ruler is based on mutual respect and expectations. As a consequence, a stubborn wife's son will never be chosen to become a leader nor will a sacrilegious and delinquent son become a leader. Following the people's values, Tatang was not popular in the community because of two reasons. First, he showed very little respect for the community and secondly, his mother had not been a model wife.

However, because Tatang was insisting on succeeding his father, the village faced political and economic instability. For instance, in one of the scenes, villagers were drinking and discussing politics, and one of them said political turmoil created future uncertainties, so he ordered the owner of the bar to serve them palm-wine. This villager wanted to enjoy himself before things got worse.

After the bar scene, there was total darkness on the stage accompanied with music sung in the Bamileke vernacular. This device was created for the purpose of enabling the actors and actresses to prepare the stage for a subsequent scene. But this device inadvertently enabled the audience to comment about the performance. Some members of the audience said that political instability had created future uncertainties which had brought the country's economy to its knee. They quoted the examples of the ghost towns (urban areas where economic activities were at a standstill because of frequent strikes), such as Douala (the country's economic capital) and Kumba (the commercial capital in the Anglophone zone), where economic activities had stopped functioning.

The performers were informing Cameroonians that political instability created future uncertainties, disillusionment and a sense of hopelessness in a community, and during this era people resorted to drink, and some people became extravagant. In such a situation, the spirit of investment was killed as many people would not want to undertake business initiatives. As a result, the economy continued to deteriorate.

To return to the performance, the elders and nobles of the village were aware of the consequences of political instability. They visited the palace with the intention of persuading Tatang to discuss the village's political situation with his political opponents so that peace could be restored. They maintained that unless the present political difficulties could be overcome, there could well be an imminent disaster. But like Bole

Butake's fon in And Palm-Wine Will Flow, Tatang refused to listen to the people and the villagers' efforts were futile:

Desop Négociier ...

Tatang Négociier? Qu'y a t-il à négociier? Vous venez de me dire qu'il se trame depuis quelques jours une conspiration contre moi.

Desop Mais Majesté

Tatang Fortant (lui-même son trône)...(Il sort. Musique très amplifiée du Kwifo et les grondements du fleuve).

At this point, some members of the audience also joined in by saying 'Monsieur négociier'. However, the majority of the audience was silent, giving the impression that they were really absorbed with the performance. Because of the audience's knowledge of the political turmoil in the country, they linked the events on stage with events in real life.

In spite of Tatang's decision to become the successor, during the late leader's funeral at the palace, none of the contestants was chosen by the villagers. Rather, the skull fell into the hands of one of the villagers who became their leader, and the villagers were happy.

The audience, like the characters on stage, were jubilant. The audience clapped and applauded. They maintained that the people should be given the opportunity to choose their own leader and added that the play was describing the leadership crisis in the country. They maintained that the leaders should understand that they could not impose themselves on the people.

The fact that the skull fell in the hands of a peasant symbolised that justice was on the side of the people. The villager who caught the skull was embarrassed and so enquired what he should say. In response to this question, other villagers who were also embarrassed maintained that they had something to say. But before the villagers in the performance responded, a faction of the audience called out 'Si tu n'as rien à dire, donnez moi le crâne'. Indeed, the audience was pleased with the outcome of the political events in the play. Others said 'La villageoise 'ekie', meaning a poor villager to become a ruler? The audience made a lot of noise when the skull fell into the hands of the villager. Tatang wanted to exploit his people for his personal benefit, but fate

intervened. Thus the performance was reminding them of the ubiquity of poetic justice and that Tatang should have repented.

The performance ended with the people singing and dancing jubilantly, symbolising a resolution to the political instability in the country:

Un homme Qu'est que je t'avais dit?

Ngonouala Que vas-tu faire de ce crâne qui vient d'atterrir entre tes mains?

Dis que vas-tu en faire (rire moqueur).

Si tu ne sais pas ce que tu vas en faire, moi je sais.

The fact that the skull fell in the hands of a villager implied that fate existed. As earlier indicated, this play was written, produced and performed in a period in which the country was facing political instability. Because of the audience's knowledge of the political turmoil, they linked the events on stage with events in real life. Perhaps the underlying message was to inform Cameroonians that a leader could come from any ethnic group and class. Therefore one ethnic group or the privileged class should not consider leadership a personal or ethnic property, and use it to impose their views on the people.

The playwright is optimistic about the political instability in the country. The main message of the performance was to inform leaders that they could not impose themselves on the people and should allow people to freely choose their own rulers. Thus the self-imposed ruler failed in his determination to rule the people. The playwright's philosophy came true when the media and a greater proportion of Cameroonians (Anglophones and Francophones alike) proclaimed that Ni Fru Ndi (a charismatic bookshop owner and the first person to launch an opposition party, the Social Democratic Front in Cameroon) won the Presidential election of October 1992, but Biya stole the former's victory. *La Messagere* No. 007, 13th Janvier 1993 wrote 'La reconcilliation est possible. si M. Biya et restitue la victoire au peuple'. Ombe wrote:

...L'impasse vient précisément de le que nos docteurs en doctorat qui se cramponnent au pourvior n'ont pas compris que la société Camerounaise pouvait faire, le moment venu, le choix de son salut. Le salut qu' incarne justement le leader du SDF. Décidément, le peuple a choisi son analphabète (Ombe 1993: 2).

The second message of the performance was to advise leaders to negotiate with their political opponents and also to listen to the people's advice. Political uncertainty divided the people, created future uncertainties which killed personal initiatives, distorted the economy and retarded development. Therefore, for the purpose of achieving national development, politicians must avoid creating political tumult. Doho implicitly maintains that the leaders of the country are responsible for the national underdevelopment, and not the disprivileged who are merely the victims of the former's attitude and ambition.

The playwright uses a village political tumult to describe the political instability in the country. In this respect, the village becomes a metaphor of the country. He creates characters with vices and virtues for the purpose of showing how political activities are enacted. The village is representative of the country with the different characters representing political actors and the people. In this way, the playwright appreciates some political actors whilst he criticises politicians whose political ambition leads them to ignore the wishes of the people. He ends his play with poetic justice as Tatang does not become the leader. Rather, an anonymous villager is destined to become the leader.

The troupe's effective use of theatrical devices helped to convey the message of the playwright. Firstly, actors'/actresses' voices and speeches were evocative. For example, although the audience jeered at Tatang, it applauded his artistic skill. The playwright also made effective use of metonymy. For example, the skull represented the post of leadership. Thus any one who possessed the skull became the leader. Consequently, the person who caught the skull became the leader. Doho used theatre to reveal the process of democracy in which any one could rule.

The costumes were impressive, corresponding with the role of each actor. For example, the self-imposed leader's costume (a royal gown) distinguished him from other actors. Clients' costumes (torn dresses) portrayed their social position. Each character wore a costume befitting his social status in the society. Thus the costumes depicted the different classes as portrayed in the performance and enhanced the success of the performance. Although stage property and stage light were less impressive, they

were not liabilities to the play. However, the characters were flat, in the sense that they remained constant to their ideas until fate intervened.

In terms of the audience response, it was enormously positive as it responded emotionally and intellectually. Emotionally, the audience was impressed with actors'/actresses' theatrical skills, the stage designer, the producer and director who contributed in conveying the message of the playwright. With regard to intellectual response, members of the audience agreed with the playwright's message. The audience was happy when the late chief's skull fell in the hands of a peasant. It could be suggested that this symbolised that justice was on the side of the people - meaning that the people would succeed in introducing real democracy in the country. The audience maintained that the leaders should understand that they could not impose themselves on the people. As a result of the constitution, President Biya succeeded President Ahidjo, thus the former was not elected by the people. Secondly, following the one-party system, President Biya has always been the sole Presidential candidate in Presidential elections. Perhaps it is in this context that the playwrights is implicitly calling on the President to allow other potential candidates to contest in the election so that the people could choose their own leader. The audience related the actions in the performance to the real political drama in the country. According to them, this play was a documentary piece of theatre, describing the activities of the country. The audience was satisfied with the entire performance- its message, the characters and the theatrical devices used to convey the message.

On the whole, these Francophone national performances portrayed that leadership played a major role in creating development or underdevelopment in a country. Doho's Le Crâne attacks a leader who forcefully imposes himself on the people. Such a leader creates political instability which in turn retards the growth of the economy, and national development. In Doho's view, a leader is responsible for a nation's destiny. Abega maintains in Sens Unique that one of the reasons why Emo-Milang remains underdeveloped is because Mbutuku, the leader, is a fool who allows Europe, through the cover of international trade, to exploit his human and natural resources. One of the aims of this play is to call for the leaders of developing countries to re-examine their relationship with their peers in Europe, the merits of international

trade, to their countries, if they want their countries to develop. Both performances called for responsible leadership.

3. C. CONCLUSION.

From the discussion above, it is obvious that both the Anglophone and Francophone national performances depicted inefficient, selfish, cruel and negligent leaders as some of the causes of national underdevelopment. The playwrights are calling for the leaders of the country to attain a more democratic and accountable governments within Cameroon. The playwrights want real democratisation.

In the Anglophone national performances, Bate Besong's Beasts of No Nation ended with the leader of the country shooting one of his advisers and maintaining that his word was double law. Eyoh's Munyenge, portrayed a chief who tyrannized his people to the point that no one dared to point out his errors. Butake's And Palm Wine Will Flow, depicted an overpowering fon who murdered critics of his policies. Francophone national performances were also concerned with a leader's role in national development. Doho's Le Crâne, depicted how an unwanted leader created division in the community, a seething atmosphere, future uncertainty and thus he retarded the community's progress. Further, Abega's Sens Unique portrayed a foolish leader who allowed the West to exploit the resources of his people.

On the whole, according to Anglophone and Francophone national theatre practitioners, a supercilious and ruthless ruler retards the community's progress. Perhaps national theatre practitioners also believe that a leader who destroys critics of his policies wastes the contribution of intelligent citizens, which could be utilized for the benefit of a progressive society. National theatre practitioners are yearning and dreaming for real democracy whereby the opposition parties and the party in power would sit in the same hall, listen to constructive criticisms, and debate on the country's social, economic, political and cultural issues. These playwrights create fictitious countries as a means of depicting realistic issues. The fact that both Anglophone and Francophone theatre practitioners portray tyrannous and uncaring leaders implies that leaders have not met up with the people's aspiration.

The question that crops up is why do the playwrights present leaders of developing countries as murderers and uncaring without providing reasons why

developing countries' leaders are murderers and uncaring. Perhaps the playwrights are portraying this abhorrent image with the intention of entreating leaders of developing countries to change their inhuman attitude and to look after their people properly. In chapter one, I noted that the local performing artists in the Bima region used theatre as one of the means to call on the leaders and the government to mete out justice and to look after the people. Also, the Megang group used theatre to call on the government and the President of the country to look after the people. Here, both Anglophone and Francophone theatre practitioners are concerned with the role of leaders in their respective countries. This showed that there was a leadership crisis in the country. Therefore, leaders at all level should look after their people, so that the people should be spiritually and physically healthy. Indeed, healthy people engage happily in projects of development. A country with healthy people is a clear indication of the development of the country. Where people are discontented and physically weak, they cannot engage in projects of development.

National theatre practitioners used theatre as a means through which they could instigate Cameroonians to constantly examine the politics of the country. If the citizens failed to do so, the belief that Biya has introduced a better type of politics may harden into a dogma. The imagination would fail and the intellect would become sterile. These theatre practitioners (playwrights, directors, stage managers, light managers, actors and actresses) were concerned with the progress of the country. That is why they exposed these issues so that the citizens of the country might examine them with scrutiny. President Biya himself has called for the citizens of the country to engage into intellectual thought, to develop the questioning habit for the purpose of developing the country. He stated:

Reflechissez, analysez, écoutez la radio, lisez le journal, refusez de croire ceux qui n'ont pas autorité et compétence pour vous informer (Biya quoted in Cameroon Tribune, No. 3080 du Septembre 1984).

Else where the President stated:

A leader wins genuine support and allegiance not by striking fear into the hearts of his fellow citizens, not by stopping the public's mouth, but by the love and confidence he inspires in the people by allowing liberty of expression of sincere opinion (Biya quoted in Sam-Kubam and Ngwa-Nyamboli 1985: 35 -6).

Indeed, President Paul Biya himself said he did not want a dogmatic society. He wanted a questioning community which might eventually lead the country to development. From the contents of the performances and the responses from the various audiences, it was clear that the people have listened to Biya's call and have developed the questioning habit. Indeed, the audience has even engaged in questioning the role of leadership in a community. People have taken Biya's statement at face value, and in the process have created a body of political challenges which threatened to undermine Biya's own position. The results of the Presidential election of 1992 reflected that the prophecies of the playwrights, the messages of the performances and the audiences' responses mirrored the wishes of the Cameroon people. As noted in the chapter, many people proclaimed that Biya stole the Presidential victory. They clearly and loudly asserted that Ni Fru Ndi won the election. From this point of view, Cameroon theatre should be taken seriously by the society because it is always on the side of the people, and it articulates the people's wishes.

¹ Pre-colonial African leaders ruled according to tradition. They were generous to their subjects, using their wealth for them. They gave them justice and protected their interest and through a leader, subjects hoped to satisfy their interest (Gluckman in Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (eds), 1987: 25 - 55). But the Fon was solely interested in his own well-being. This explained why there was a growing sense of anger among the Ewawians.

² Theatre practitioners, such as Piscator, Brecht, Boal, Ngugi, Fugard and many others maintain that theatre can not avoid politics. Politics is an integral part of theatre. Politics and theatre are twin sisters. See Piscator, 1980: 17, 23; Brecht, 1986: 108, 7; Boal, 1987: 122, Ngugi, 1986: 43, and Fugard, 1986, 211-233.

³ First Ghost was strengthening the belief that ghosts have the power to be invisible.

⁴ Hart maintains that West Africa's raw materials mean more to West Africa than to the West, thus West Africa's eventual withdrawal from the world market poses no serious problem to the West. But he contradicts his assertion when he admits that the United States and parts of Europe developed rapidly with the aid of human power which was imported from West Africa (Hart, 1982: 114 & 118). As Smith pointed out, the West cannot stop trading with developing countries, including West Africa, because capitalism everywhere depends upon the development of some parts of the world and the underdevelopment of others (Smith, quoted in Keesing, 1981: 444 & 448).

CHAPTER FOUR.

WOMEN AND THEIR ROLE IN NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.

Some of the performances discussed in this chapter were examined in chapter three. This chapter is concerned with the role of women and development in these performances. Both Anglophone and Francophone national performances portrayed women as people who participated actively in a community's socio-economic and political issues, and also sacrificed their lives for the benefit of their respective communities. We noted in chapters one and two that village and city women produced theatre which dealt with a variety of themes, such as the fate of women and the poor, a call for the dominant class to mete out justice and so on. In this chapter, the women featured as actresses in the plays. But they did not produce theatre. Instead, men used theatre as a means through which they could call on women to participate in the national socio-economic, political and cultural activities of the public domain. The chapter is divided into three parts. Part one examines the role of women in national development in Anglophone national performances, part two investigates women's contribution to national development in the Francophone national performances, and part three is the conclusion.

4. A. WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT IN ANGLOPHONE NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.

The plays examined in this chapter include Butake's The Survivors, And Palm-Wine Will Flow, Eyoh's The Magic Fruit and The Inheritance. References are made to Bate Besong's Requiem For The Last Kaiser and Butake's The Lake God.

Butake's The Survivors was performed by the Yaounde University Theatre Troupe in the Amphitheatre of the University of Yaounde on 19th May 1989. I did not

watch this play, but I bought the video cassette from CRTV which filmed the play. I also interviewed the playwright, the director, the performers and some people who watched the play.

The Survivors is set in a desert. The play portrays the plight of the survivors of a natural disaster in the Nyos region. An actual disaster happened in a region occupied by the Nyos people in the North West Province in mid 1987. It was a national catastrophe. The President of the Republic of Cameroon declared a day for Cameroonians to mourn their fellow country men. Aid was sent to the survivors from international and national organizations. It was on the basis of this disaster that Butake created the plot of his play The Survivors. The basic story was therefore already well known to the audience because it was based on a famous incident. The fascination of watching this play, therefore, was not in wondering who the survivors were, but how they were treated.

There are five survivors (Old One, Mboysi, Ngujuh, Bolame and Tata), one officer and three soldiers. The play describes how the aid that was sent to the survivors of lake Nyos disaster was misdirected or monopolized by top government officers and army officers who used their guns to keep the survivors silent. However, Mboysi (the young woman) falls in love with the officer and through her the officer provides food and drink to the survivors. At one point in the play, Old One realises that the officer is preventing the survivors from leaving the desert so that philanthropic organizations can continue to send aid to the survivors. As indicated earlier, this aid was monopolised by the officer and his superiors. Mboysi realises that the officer is also using her to satisfy his animal instincts. she is very angry. With this anger she goes to the officer's tent, pretends to love him even more, but adroitly makes the officer to give her his gun which she uses to shoot him. The soldiers hear the gun shots, rush to the scene and shoot Mboysi. The play ends with Mboysi's death while the other survivors escape to the land of Ewawa. In this play Mboysi is the main character. Through her relationship with one of the officers, she saves the lives of the survivors and also sacrifices her life for the purpose of enabling the survivors to escape to the land of Ewawa.

The performance began with the five survivors, who had hastily built a crude grass hut in a desert in Nyos region. 'Old One' who sat in front of the hut was very

moody. They were dressed in old torn clothes which symbolised poverty. A few yards away from the hut, a tent was lavishly set with piles of full cartons and sacks. An officer sat on a chair and munched a sumptuous meal. A revolver was placed prominently on the table. The survivors were on their way to the region of Ewawa where they hoped to find food and water since they were starving in the desert:

Tata There is hunger in my belly and thirst in my throat. I can die of hunger and thirst.

Mboysi Listen, children, there is no water to drink and we do not have any food, anything to eat.

At this point of the performance, the audience was silent. The overall atmosphere was that of pity and sorrow. Perhaps the audience wondered why the five survivors starved when aid was sent to them from international and national organizations. The atmosphere was full of anxiety. Members of the audience who wanted to comment were hushed by others. They did not want to miss a word or action of the performance.

Although the five survivors starved and also lacked proper shelter, the different types of aid (food, clothes) sent to them from philanthropic organizations and individuals were not released by the officer. The officer enumerated the aid he had received. These included a carton of cooking oil from...two bags of rice from...fifty sheep from...one million frs of cash from...and so on. At this point, the audience understood where the aid had been channelled.

To return to the performance, besides monopolising the aid sent to the survivors, the officer used his revolver to prevent the survivors from seeking refuge in the land of Ewawa. In this respect, the gun was a symbol of suppression. The Officers' intention was to retain the survivors in the savannah desert in order to ensure the continued inflow of more aid which he and his superiors used to enrich themselves. Following the officer's intention, the survivors became hostages but ironically they did not understand why they were trapped in the desert and how their departure from the desert was a problem for the officer. After giving the subject deep thought, 'Old One' pointed out that the officer was preventing them from leaving the desert so that

philanthropic organizations would continue to send aid for the survivors. But as we have noted, this aid was monopolised by the officers and his superiors:

- Voice Don't move! Don't move. Halt. (The five characters are transfixed.
 After a while they turn round uncertainly and walk in the direction from
 which they have just come).
- Old One There is no going forward. And there is no turning back.
- Ngujoh: Terrifying voices. But the crime.
- Mboysi You mean the crime we have committed?
- Ngujoh Yes, what crime have we committed?
- Old One Survival.

Having threatened to shoot any of the survivors who moved, 'Old One' and Ngujoh persuaded Mboysi (the young woman) to meet the officer in his tent. Initially she refused, but when she realised that the survivors were starving, she agreed to meet the officer. During this meeting, she eventually became the officer's mistress. She returned in a new outfit, with drink and food. She was disgusted with the situation in which she found herself, thus she shouted at Ngujoh (one of the male survivors). Her shouting made the audience laugh. The audience thought she was shouting because she brought food and drinks from the officer. The survivors admitted that she was their saviour because she has saved them from hunger and thirst and that a woman was capable of instilling tenderness even into the hardhearted.

During this scene, some the audience actually engaged in discussing loudly the performance. They debated on the idea of women's liberation. The female members of the audience questioned whether women were really liberated. They maintained that Mboysi was used by both men: the survivors persuaded her to become the officer's lover so that they could get food and water and the officer used her for his selfish animal desires. This group of women stressed that the whole idea of women's liberation as portrayed in the play was futile since the woman was used by the men.

At one point in the performance, she accused the officer of treating the survivors like animals. The officer not only accepted Mboysi's assertion, he also shared the secret with Mboysi. He said that he has been instructed by his superiors, probably the government officers, to prevent the survivors from leaving the desert:

Mboysi You just take us for animals. Animals in the cage.

Officer: Not me, woman! Not me!

Mboysi: Who then? If it is not you.

Officer: Orders from above.

The officer added that without the woman, he did not care about the well-being of the survivors:

Officer No one cares if they [the survivors] survive. Without you I don't care about their survival. My survival is more important.

The officer's assertion made the audience sad. Indeed, the atmosphere was silent and was characterised by pity for the survivors. This showed that the audience actually identified with the survivors, the deprived of the community, whilst the officer represented the dominant class. We noted earlier that some men and women actually engaged in discussing loudly the whole notion of women's liberation as portrayed in the performance. Thus there were two groups identifying with the characters in the play. While the women considered themselves to be the victims of men exploitation, the men mockingly said Mboysi was a liberated woman. It was a debate on sexual freedom. This debate was followed by another division within the audience. The oppressed in the society identified themselves with the survivors who were exploited, and believed that the officer was a representative of the exploiters, indicating class conflict. During an interview with the playwright, he maintained that his main intention was to highlight the fact that the survivors did not receive the aid that was sent to them. The audience acknowledged the playwright's intention, but interpreted the play beyond the playwright's intended meaning. The members of the audience identified two issues: class and gender conflicts.

The officer was callous towards the well-being of the survivors, but wanted them to survive because he wanted the woman's services. He failed to acknowledge that his enormous happiness and acquisition of wealth depended on the survivors' existence. The officer who represented the privileged class was indifferent towards the survival of the down-trodden, who were represented by the survivors. However, his class (the favoured class) wanted her class (the less privileged class) to exist in order to ensure the continual expropriation of goods and services from the latter. This notion of

class conflict appeared in one of the Megang group's song entitled Bikoe be tari yamedzo where pygmies (the privileged class) abhorred the lepers (the socially disadvantaged class) but loved the latter's music. The situation was similar to that in South Africa. Meillassoux has pointed out that although many whites (the privileged class) in South Africa detested blacks (the less favoured class), the latter's services were indispensable. Thus whites encouraged blacks to reproduce themselves for the purpose of ensuring enough miners to work in the mines (Meillassoux 1988: 117 - 136).

After Mboysi had visited the officer several times, she too like the old man realised that the piles of cartons and sacks in the officer's tent were sent to aid the survivors. Meanwhile the officer kept the aid for himself and his people, grew rich on their misfortune, while he gave an insignificant quantity to the survivors who thought that he was very generous. Above all, he has been using her for his selfish animal desires. She was angry at becoming aware of these facts and was determined on revenge.

Mboysi returned to the officer's tent. As the officer saw her arriving, he jumped up, searched around frantically for the insecticide spray which he used to spray the room each time she visited. He found it and moved towards the entrance through which Mboysi would appear. Mboysi entered and the officer tried to use the spray to disinfect her. According to the officer, he must take precaution, because the region where the woman lived was dangerous, and the only safe place was his tent which had been sealed off.

Although he did not want his tent to be contaminated, he wanted the woman's services. However, the woman prevented him from using the spray on her and maintained that she had tolerated his insults long enough. She also reminded him that she was a school teacher before the tragedy. When the officer realised that she was serious, he promised to stop using the insecticide.

Mboysi cunningly persuaded the officer to hand over the gun:

Officer Put my revolver away or I will kill you.

Mboysi So you will kill me, will you? Then I will make sure I kill you first.

Officer No! Please don't kill me! I didn't mean to say so.

Mboysi: You would kill me, would you? You crawling thieving maggot. Growing rich on the misfortune of others. Stuffing your decaying stomach and your bulging pockets on the calamity of my people. Never again shall you live to perpetuate our misery...Keep crawling, you rotten maggot! Even if I die after killing you I will be satisfied that I have my revenge...(Mboysi fires two shots and kills the officer).

The audience applauded when Mboysi forced the police officer to crawl before she fired two shots. Some members of the audience really asserted that women should emulate the example of Mboysi so that the country could get rid of people like the officer. They were right because the police officer who suppressed the survivors was a representative of the privileged class while Mboysi was a symbol of the people.

After she had shot the officer, there was a feeling of triumph. She sent the four survivors to collect their few belongings so that they could continue their journey to the land of Ewawa. However, the victory was short-lived as other officers rushed to the tent and shot her. Women in the audience were sad. Nevertheless, the other survivors escaped to the land of Ewawa. The performance ended with Mboysi's death. Her death implied that the playwright who is a man used Mboysi to create an opportunity for the survivors to escape. Mboysi was therefore a sacrificial victim.

The playwright succinctly implies that women are not people who can not analyse situations as the officer claims. The playwright is a revolutionary who incites women to rise against the dominant class and exploiters. For example, Mboysi (the fictitious woman) played an important role. Because of her relationship with the officer, she fed the survivors, and thus was portrayed as a source of life. Without her, the survivors would have perished in the savannah desert. Furthermore, although she was shot after killing the officer, she distracted the officers for a short time and this allowed an opportunity for the four survivors to escape. In a nutshell, without this woman, the survivors would have perished in the desert. Thus the power of women was succinctly captured and prominently projected. The playwright is informing women that they should rise up against greedy oppressors who create an unhealthy community. In a society where the privileged class monopolises the wealth of the community, there is

bound to be social discontentment. In order to attain social contentment within the society, women should participate in getting rid of the oppressors ¹.

Much of the information about the performance of Butake's And Palm Wine Will Flow has already been provided in chapter three. In this chapter, I am concerned with those scenes of the performance that dealt with the way the women in a developing country should act. I will describe the audience's response to these scenes. The actresses involved in these scenes and those who were also the main characters in this chapter included the Earth-Goddess, Kwengong and other women.

As mentioned earlier in chapter three, in the land of Ewawa, the fon and Shey were in opposition. While Shey was in the sacred grove, messengers from the palace conveyed the messages of the fon who threatened to get rid of Shey. While they were conveying the messages, the Earth-Goddess entered into Kwengong and through this means, the Earth-Goddess pronounced a drought:

Earth-Goddess	The sun shines on the hills.
	The sun shines in the valleys.
	The sun shines in the depths of the streams.
	The sun shines.

The messenger and Nsangong who had brought the threats from the fon were tremendously frightened. In astonished voices, they enquired where this unearthly voice came from. Shey replied that it was the voice of the Earth-Goddess. He added that she had pronounced a drought. The audience was only too aware of the fact that the voice from the mask was that of Kwengong and they had a good laugh. But the audience was contented that a woman disguised to scare the men away. Some of the women who watched this performance therefore had the last laugh. They were more excited than the men in the audience that women disguised themselves and frightened men off. Indeed, the audience applauded. Some women said 'mhummm women'! (one of the meanings was that the women had reduced the men to nothingness). It was the first appearance of a female character on the stage, and she had an overwhelming influence on the male characters. Women in the audience were happy.

In the next scene, the women complained to Shey (their husband) that their farms were seized by the fon and given to one of the obedient councillors:

- Voices Shey! Our husband!
 Father of our children!
 Shey, our husband! Are you sitting there quietly
 when our farms have been seized from us?
 What shall we eat? What shall our children eat?
 What shall you eat, Shey? We know you are in there.
 Speak up, Shey. Or shall we come into the sacred presence in
 our present conditions? Speak up, Shey.
- Shey Peace, wives! Peace! ...Is Kwengong, my first wife, with you?
- Voices We are all here, Husband!...Father of our children.
- Shey Kwengong, let the others go back home and wait there. You
 [Kwengong] come inside.
- Voices We hear you well, father of our children. We will go home to wait
 there.

The male members of the audience were pleased with the submissive tone of the women. Some men indeed, maintained that if women spoke in the manner in which these women had spoken, men would respond swiftly and accordingly. By contrast, the women in the audience did not agree with men. They said those days had passed, when women regarded men as the breadwinners of families. Men should not expect such behaviour from the women of today. They reminded the men in the hall that they should be aware of the fact that they were watching a play, that the theatre was only theatre and not the world itself. It was interesting to hear women members of the audience asserting that they were in theatre and not in the real world. When the Earth-Goddess frightened off the male characters, many of the women were happy and they did not say they were merely watching a play. In response to their assertion, the men present could only laugh. In a society in which men consider themselves to be the superior sex, it would have been discreditable to engage in an argument with women.

Kwengong entered the sacred grove and Shey enquired why they (his wives) went to the fon's palace. Kwengong said they too wanted to have a share of the good things in the fon's palace. But instead of having a share of these good things, their farm-lands were seized by him. Shey reminded her that she should not trouble herself

about the farm-land because the Earth-Goddess had pronounced a drought. Kwengong questioned when the drought would begin since it was still the heart of the dry season. She asked how long they would have to wait to see this judgement fulfilled:²

Kwengong But Shey, we are in the middle of the dry season.

How long shall we wait to see this judgement come?

The women noticed with dismay that their tyrannous, irresponsible and oppressive fon derived satisfaction from oppressing the people and concluded that they could not wait any longer. Thus they decided to poison the fon with women's urine for the purpose of liberating Ewawians from suppression. The Ewawians held the view that women's urine was very venomous, thus anyone who drank it died shortly afterwards. By contrast, among the Keyangs in Manyu Division, the people believe that the best drug for a child attacked by convulsion is its mother's urine.

Having agreed on the method of murdering the fon, the women gathered and were stark naked. They urinated in a pot and their leader (Kwengong) took the urine to the fon. When she reached the fon's, the Earth-Goddess entered into Kwengong and the Goddess worked through Kwengong.

To reiterate this long dialogue which appeared in chapter three is to show how the women murdered their fon:

Kwengong (To the fon) Here are the wares the women commanded deliverance to their Fon. Here are the fruits they urged me feed the crocodile that swallows its own eggs!...May they make you call another feast before the sun goes to sleep!

Fon (looks curiously into the pot then turns away suddenly, holding his nose) Urine! Urine? What is the meaning of this abomination?

Kwengong Not urine, Chila Kintasi.

But the savory juice from
the vaginas of those upon whom You wield power, Fon.

Drink, oh fon!

Drink the liquor from the vaginas
and feel the power of power.

Fon I will die first.

Kwengong Then you will die, indeed, Chila Kintasi!
 Your own mouth pronounced judgement.
 Die and deliver the land from the
 abominations of drunkenness and gluttony. (She used a bunch of soft
 feather attached on a bamboo stick on the fon. The fon begins to reel
 until he collapses). Die! Chila Kintasi.
 Die fon!. So that we may think.
 The people need your death to think.
 Die! Die! Die!

When the women (through the aid of the Earth-Goddess) killed their fon, the audience applauded. The audience was happy to see the tyrannous fon dead. Some women in the audience said that it was the women who got rid of the fon. Without the women, the fon would have continued to live. According to them, credit should go to the women of Ewawa. They were really delighted, and uttered a peculiar laugh common to a great proportion of the Cameroon women. Some said that if they were given an opportunity to take an active role in politics, they too would act like the women in the play. Males members of the audience did not bother about what some of these women said. They were solely interested that the tyrannous fon was dead.

The last scene of the performance, described how Kwengong together with the Tapper made new rules to govern the land of Ewawa. Kwengong said that the people must have a right in deciding who ruled the people.

The audience was very pleased with this assertion, particularly in view of the political situation in the Cameroon. Some women were indeed pleased to see a woman making the rules of the country. Kwengong mockingly said women were the only people in the land:

Kwengong The only men left in the land are the women. And they do not want any
 more fons. The people will rule through the council of elders led by
 Shey here. The day that he takes the wrong decision, that same day, the
 people shall meet in the market place and put another at the head of the
 council of elders...(to Tapper) Sound the bugle and let the people
 assemble in the market place.

The audience was pleased with the new political system established in the land of Ewawa. They also admired Kwengong. It was not merely her message which pleased the audience, but the manner in which she said it. She demonstrated full authority. The whole audience laughed. Some of them said if women were rulers, they would be more strict than men, and some of the women wanted Kwengong to become the leader of Ewawa. After all, it was the women who liberated Ewawa from the tyrannous fon.

The playwright does not want to suggest that a woman can become the leader of a country. He does not want to inculcate these ideas in women. Although Butake wants women to participate in politics, they must have a limit. In this sense, Butake believes in men's superiority. Butake is fully aware of the fact that women have been leaders in other countries, such as Indira Gandhi in India, Margaret Thatcher in United Kingdom and Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan. Perhaps, as a result of the fact that no woman has ever become a leader in an African country, Butake does not want Cameroon to be the first country to have a woman President. Even when President Biya advocated that the people of Cameroon should form political parties, and as a result over ten parties emerged, however, only one woman from Bafia (a division in the Centre Province) formed a party which disappeared a few months later. This implies that the Cameroon woman still has a long way to go.

In spite of the above argument, Butake succeeds in conveying his message. His aim is to inform the Cameroon women that they too can participate in politics ³.

Butake believes women are capable of getting rid of a corrupt and oppressive leader. Hence in And Palm-Wine Will Flow, the women succeed in killing their fon. On the whole, Butake is effectively telling women that they are capable of participating actively in the national politics for the purpose of ensuring a progressive community ⁴.

Much information about the performance of Eyoh's The Magic Fruit has already been provided in chapter three. In this chapter, I am concerned with the role of women in development. The main characters who are discussed in this chapter are Mother 1 (first wife), Mother 2 (second wife), and children. The play shows how women are the custodians of the community's values and the educators. They teach the children the values and the norms of the society.



Picture Number 25. Mother 1 tells the children stories in The Magic Fruit.



Picture Number 26. Mother 1 advises the children to abstain from the mistakes of the old generations.

The performance began with Mother 1 telling the children a story about the tortoise, the trickster. (See pictures number 25 and 26) Birds were invited to a festival in the sky. Tortoise was eager to attend the festival, but since he had no feathers, he borrowed them from the birds. During the festival, everyone introduced himself/herself and tortoise said his name was 'for all of you'. Hence when the host provided food and drinks to the visitors, tortoise monopolised everything under the pretext that his name was 'for all of you'. The birds became furious and forced tortoise to return their feathers. The tortoise is noted in many African tales as an animal that outwits the strongest (lion) and biggest (elephant) animals in the animal world (See Burton 1961: 126 - 133 and Barber 1991: 11 - 25).

Mother 1 liked telling the children didactic stories. Thus one evening they came to listen to her stories. After she has told many stories, she realised that it was dusk, so the children must return to their homes. However, the stories were very interesting, and the children were reluctant to return to their various homes. But she told them to go home and to be good to their parents. The children created a song out of the advice and chanted as they walked to their various homes:

Be good, be good!
That's all that we hear! {Two times}
Be bad, be bad. (sic)
Why don't we have a chance? {Two times}
Be good, be good.
That's what we want to be. {Two times}

This is a morality play intended to edify the old generation and above all, to teach the young generation who will be the future leaders of Cameroon to avoid the old generation's mistakes. By making a woman the educationist in this play, Eyoh is implicitly asserting that women should play a major role in educating the young generation so that they should grow up as responsible citizens and thus develop Cameroon.

During the performance of this play, the audience applauded by clapping and nodding. I have already stated in chapter three that after the performance, the audience assembled in a bar where they drank and discussed the play. Some of the people said corruption, avarice, and gluttony had ruined the country's economy. Therefore if subsequent generations would avoid these vices, the country would be a healthy one.

Eyoh used children to point out the errors of adults, particularly the country's decision makers who through their weaknesses (gluttony, avarice and so on) had ruined the country's economy. As was clear, the audience got his message, but it was particularly impressed with the artistic aspects, rather than the message.

During an interview, Eyoh maintained that his intention was to teach children to refrain from practising selfishness that had characterised the Cameroon community. He added that Cameroonian children might believe that selfishness was acceptable in the community; however gluttony and selfishness are vices and not virtues. This performance implicitly called for the young generation to avoid the mistakes which were common in the Cameroon community. The President of Cameroon also called on the young generation to strive for moral uprightness, and also to endeavour to avoid the mistakes of the old generations (Biya quoted in Sam-Kubam and Ngwa-Nyamboli 1985: 364 - 5). Eyoh believes like a host of thinkers such as Plato, that the environment in which a child is reared is a pre-given educational milieu which conditions the child's way of thinking. Consequently, members of a given community must eschew enacting meaningless behaviour which the child might imitate. On the contrary, they should encourage children to mimic those values which are acceptable in the community (Plato quoted in Hall 1981). For Eyoh, it is the women who carry children in their stomachs for the duration of nine months, suffer the agony of childbirth, and also look after the children. Therefore women should be charged with the responsibility of rearing good citizens.

The audience that watched this play was predominantly adults. The choice of audience meant that although the play was performed by children, the message was also directed to the adults. Eyoh merely used the children to express and convey his views about the society. Also, in Eyoh's The Inheritance the playwright calls for women to participate in national politics, and also to sacrifice their lives for the purpose of restoring peace in the country. Thus in his play The Inheritance, Ma Mende dies in the process of finding a solution to the village's political crisis.

In Butake's The Survivors, Mboysi shot the police officer and sacrificed her life for the benefit of the other survivors. In And Palm-Wine Will Flow, the women through the aid of the Earth-Goddess killed the Fon for the purpose of liberating the

land from an oppressive leader. Also, in Bate Besong's The Requiem For The Last Kaiser, the woman and the leader of the market women jointly incited all the oppressed groups in the community to get rid of their irresponsible leader. Furthermore, Eyoh's The Magic Fruit portrayed Mother 1 as the custodian of the values of her community and the educationist in her community.

From the foregoing analysis, it is clear that the Anglophone national playwrights hold the opinion that women should participate actively in national socio-economic, political and educational issues. They should be very instrumental in helping the people to get rid of uncaring leaders, and to educate the young generation to grow up as responsible citizens. Theatre practitioners transmit their views by creating fictitious countries and showing how the women in these countries contribute to the welfare of their respective countries. These Anglophone national playwrights are effectively calling on the Cameroon women to rise and participate in the country's activities.

However, as noted in the discussion, the women who watched Bole Butake's The Survivors actually questioned the extent to which men actually wanted women to participate in the public domain. For example, in Butake's The Survivors, Mboysi was sacrificed for the purpose of ensuring the continuity of the group. In his And Palm-Wine Will Flow, the women killed their Fon, but power still passed to men. In Eyoh's The Inheritance, Ma Mende died in order to ensure peace in the village.

Some of these playwrights do not actually want women to participate in the public domain. These playwrights want women to participate in politics for the purpose of ensuring peace, but not to hold responsible posts. The fact is that the Anglophone national playwrights want women to contribute to the welfare of the state, but they do not want them to become the central figures in politics. These playwrights' views were mirrored in the performances. As shown in the discussion, female members of the audience did not want women to become the victims of their respective societies. They actually wanted women to hold responsible posts.

4. B. WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT IN FRANCOPHONE NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.

In this section, I will look at the performances of Les Perles Noires and Théâtre Université. These performances were enacted during the Cameroon Theatre Festival of 1991. The plays performed by these troupes include Abega's Le Sein t' est Pris (sic) and Doho's Le Crâne. Abega's Le Sein t' est Pris portrays a woman as the victim of the global economic system. In contrast, Doho's Le Crâne shows women as active politicians in their community.

Abega's Le Sein t' est Pris is centred around the problems of a nuclear family. The unemployed husband blames the country's economic crisis which is causing unemployment. He is disgusted with everything: the wife, the baby and the people around him. Surrounded by financial problems, he decides to live on his wife's breast milk and sell some of the milk. In order to achieve his aim, he prevents the wife from feeding their baby with her breast milk. The baby dies of starvation whilst the husband uses the money he makes from the sales of the wife's breast milk to purchase a suit made in France and a ticket from Air France to enable him and his mistress spend a week end in France.

Le Sein t' est Pris is segmented into three main episodes. The first episode introduces the audience to the family's dispute. The family starves, but the unemployed husband exacerbates the situation by asserting that the wife is lazy. This accusation kindles a dispute between Koum and his wife. The second episode depicts Koum's solution to their economic crisis. The wife Nam is big-breasted, thus the husband decides to sell some of the wife's breast milk to a rich mother who does not want to breast feed her child and he decides also to drink some of the milk himself. He also decides to prevent the wife from breast feeding their child. In order to prevent his wife from breast feeding their baby, he tethers the wife and fits containers on to the wife's breast. Thus since Nam is tethered, she cannot reach her baby. The third episode describes how Koum uses the income he makes from the sales of the wife's breast milk to purchase a suit made in France and tickets from Air France in order to enable him

and his girlfriend spend a week-end in France. On the whole, the play includes two main characters - a husband and a wife - and the voice of their baby, who is never seen. The play revolves around a domestic crisis with wider political, economic, social and cultural dimensions.

Abega's Le Sein t' est Pris was performed by Les Perles Noires at l'Amphi de École Normale Supérieure, Yaounde, on the 28th March 1991 during the Cameroon Theatre Festival. It was the last play performed during the festival week. The stage property consisted of planks made in the form of a bench and a cupboard. One of the main themes of Le Sein t' est Pris is the portrayal of women as the source of life and material wealth. However, the main female character is used by different groups of oppressors (the husband, the rich, and the West) who exploit her breast-milk. It is this theme which is my concern in this chapter.

The performance opened with Koum returning to the family's one bedroom flat. He attacked people who talked of generosity, humanity, solidarity, progress, hospitality and so on when he was starving. Koum was disgusted with his misery in an opulent world, and thus found faults in everything around him. He soliloquized his problems:

Koum Ah, bandits, les infâmes canailles, les ingrats, me faire cela à moi, moi qui les ai nourris à ma table...hospitalité, la générosité..."je ne peux plus te faire crédit, je ne peux plus te faire crédit rembourse-moi d'abord ce que tu me dois" Même le trésorie de notre association tribale a eu le front de me chanter le même couplet...N'ont-ils pas là crise règne? D'ailleurs, je vais donner des consignes très strictes à ma femme à ce sujet. Je suis chez moi, bien que je ne reconnaisse plus ma maison depuis quelque temps, depuis que cet enfant est né. Je peux crier, mourir de froid, de faim...Il y a longtemps qu'aucune marmite n'a bouilli dans cette maison. Et comme je n'ai rien donné pour qu'on fasse le marché. Mais qu'y puis-je?...Je n'ai plus vu la couleur de l'argent voilà...je n'ai pas de salaire, moi pas de rente, rien, rien.

After his soliloquy, he asked whether there was anyone in the house. Nam came out but she said she thought there was someone in the house. In her opinion, a man who could not feed his family was not "a manly man" (Chaucer 1992: 56):

Koum ...N'y a-t-il personne dans cette maison? Pourquoi ne répondez-vous pas?

Nam Qui est là...Ah, c'est toi? Tu m'as fait peur. J'ai cru qu'il y avait quelqu'un.

Koum Mais il y a quelqu'un!

Nam Mon Dieu, où est-il?

Koum Et moi, ne suis-je pas quelqu'un?

Nam Non, je voulais dire un voleur.

He accused the woman of laziness, especially as she did not offer him food. The woman rejected his accusation and defended herself by pointing out that she did not have enough sleep lately because the child cried all night. The man was angry and shouted at the top of his voice. He also said whether or not she had had a sound sleep was irrelevant. He added that he hated the piercing screams of the baby. The woman made a heartfelt appeal to the man to stop shouting, since the noise might awaken the baby. In spite of this plea, her husband shouted even louder. He had realised that since the birth of the child, the wife suddenly became more attached to the baby than to him. This realisation induced him to hate their child. The wife noticed that her husband hated their baby, and thus she ignored him. The husband noticed that the wife looked down on him and he beat her severely until she vowed to carry out his slightest instruction.

At this point, the women who watched the play said he was a dog, others simply sighed, while the men remained mute. After the wife's submission, the husband gave her careful instructions on how she should use her breast milk. The husband was a follower of Aristotle who considered marriage to be a relationship based on asymmetry where the husband naturally dominated whilst the woman remained submissive. In Aristotle's view, the female by nature is inferior, born to obey and without any virtue or ability to think (Aristotle cited in Bluestone 1987: 27). The husband could be compared with Yanomamo men who inflicted violence on women, such as rape, severe beatings, and treated them as slaves in order to assert men's superiority (Chagnon cited in Sanday 1981: 46).

Although the husband used male aggression to subdue the wife, she was like Mundurucu women. The Mundurucu women did not believe in men's domination and women's subordination. Some of the women fought the men who attempted to

dominate them (Murphy and Murphy cited in Sanday 1981: 164 - 5). The wife pinpointed her husband's faults, pointed them out to him and also advised him.

Koum believed that Nam was largely responsible for his problems. He added that she was solely preoccupied with cuddling her baby and expected him to provide the family's needs. He had expected her to contribute to the family's basic needs, but instead she opted to have a baby who brought additional cost to the family. The wife retorted sharply. She reminded the husband of the fact that she was uneducated and thus could not get a job in the civil service. Besides he was too poor to establish a business for her. She asked him how she could contribute to household expenses given the circumstances. Women who watched the performance pitied the wife. They sighed and said 'enhe' (I wonder), while the men remained mute. It was not only the woman's argument that moved the audience, it was the manner in which she presented her case. She moved from one end of the stage to another, and also directed her questions to the audience.

She advised her husband to stop watching the child with jealousy and to think of a solution to their financial problem. She also criticised him for preferring to live in the city when he fully understood that he would not get a job. She added that he detested the village because he could not work in the farm. She summed up the argument by asking him where he belonged since he detested the farming occupation and would not get a job in the city.

The wife was implicitly advising people to acquire a skill which might enable them to identify themselves with a particular place, be it a city or a village. In the woman's view, it was frustrating for an unqualified, unemployed, poor person to live in a city, because he or she would not find a job and would not establish a business.

In spite of Nam's advice, Koum insisted that Nam should give him food and added that wives should assist their husbands by providing family's needs. In frustration, Nam enumerated the merits of village life and the frustrations in cities. Nam advised Koum that they should return to the village where life was less costly:

Koum Donne-moi à manger!

Nam Mais tu sais bien qu'il n'y a rien à manger! Si tu as laissé de l'argent...Celui avec lequel j'ai fait mon marché.

Koum Mais tu sais aussi que dans la plupart des ménages, la femme n'attend pas que le mari ramène de l'argent à la maison. Elle travaille aussi.

Nam Travailler, travailler! A quelle occupation veux-tu que je m'adonne?...Oh si! Oh si! Voilà des lustré que je crie que nous devrions rentrer dans notre village cultiver la terre. Mais, toi, tu as d'autres idées en tête. Ici, nous achetons tout. La maison...l'eau, nous la payons, la nourriture aussi. Finalement, nous travaillons pour d'autres. Nous pourrions si aisément produire ce que nous consommons. Mais toi, tu prétends chaque jour que tu as un rang à tenir, un honneur, une image de marque à présenter. Rang, honneur, image de marque, notions sans substance, qui nous ruinent cependant!

Nam had an appalling impression about city life. Jones maintained that "the city was a consumer of mankind...it fed on those who lived beyond it...it offered disease and misery, poverty and want to millions; at its worst it made human life cheap and human values worthless" (Jones 1967: 1). To Rousseau, "cities are the final pit of the human spirit" (Rousseau cited in Jones 1967: 1).

The husband found a solution to his financial problem. He decided to sell some of the wife's breast milk to a rich mother who did not want to breast feed her baby. Without giving his plans a moment's thought, he gave careful instructions to the wife that the baby should be breast-fed only after he had had enough of the breast milk. In order to ensure that the wife did not breast-feed the baby in his absence, he rushed to a shop to purchase containers to fit on to the wife's breasts and a twine rope to tether her so that he would have total control over her milk. The husband carefully carried out his plans of using the wife's breast milk both as a means of finance and as a source of food.

However, while the husband was away, the wife carefully packed her suitcase with the intention of returning to her parents who lived in the village. She believed that life in the village would be fair to her and her baby since she would no longer starve and there would be no husband to deprive her baby of its breast milk. She had learnt that the city was not a place for poor unemployed people. She also knew that she would be able to participate in the economic world if she returned to the village:



Picture Number 27. Koum fits containers unto Nam's breast and uses a twine rope to tie her to the wall in Le sein t'est pris.



Picture Number 28. Koum on his way to the airport.

Nam ...Je ne sais pas comment j'ai réussi à supporter cette situation jusqu'à présent..Alors, je préfère rentrer au village cultiver la terre...Je finis de faire cette valise et je disparaissais...Si je passe encore une nuit dans cette situation, j'y perdrai sûrement la vie...La terre ne connaît pas de crise; son lait ne tarit pas...

The husband returned and found his wife's suitcase in the centre of the drawing room, and thus became furious at knowing that she intended to escape. He could not understand why the wife was refusing to realise that the world was changing and people must also change. In spite of the problems the family faced in the city, the husband strongly believed that salvation was in the city and not in the village:

Koum Qu'est ceci? Madame fait ses valises! Elle s'apprête à me quitter! En voilà des manières...

Koum, like Jones, believed that when a man was tired of the city, he was tired of life (Jones 1967: 1). In order to prevent his wife from returning to the village, he used a big padlock on the door that led to the room where the baby was lying. He was fully aware of the fact that the wife would not leave without her baby. The wife was determined to return to the village, thus she pleaded with the husband to remove the big padlock from the door. But he refused to listen to the wife's earnest plea. Rather, he wanted to ensure that she would obey his slightest instructions before removing the padlock. He gave her the twine rope and the containers and ordered her to fit the container on to her breasts and put the rope around her neck. In this respect, the child would be deprived of the breast milk. Koum did not want to lose even a drop of his wife's breast milk. Initially the wife refused to be treated like an animal, but when her baby started screaming and she could not reach it, she submitted to the husband's demands:

Nam En tout cas, je ne laisserai pas mon enfant mourir de faim pour une histoire aussi stupide...J'y consens. A contre-cœur peut-être, mais que ne ferait une mère pour son enfant?

The husband carefully fitted the containers on to her breast, tied one end of the rope around her neck and chest, and the other on the wall. Thus Nam was tethered like a goat (see picture number 27).

At this point in the performance, some members of the audience said the man's behaviour should act as a deterrent to young village girls who look down on potential suitors in villages but prefer city dwellers. This group confirmed the popular observation that young girls in villages prefer to get married to city dwellers rather than local village boys. The girls believe that life in the city is more attractive than life in the village. However, some of these girls are disappointed when they come to the cities and realise that their husbands live in ghettos. Quite often the girls are ashamed to return to the villages.

Although Nam had accepted to be treated like a beast for the sake of her child, she could not reach her baby because she was tethered. In this respect, she was not rewarded for her submissiveness and the husband had not respected his promise of allowing her to reach her baby if she carried out his instructions. Although both the husband and the wife lived in extreme poverty, they were two different characters. Whereas the wife was loving, humanistic, rich in ideas and philosophical in her views, the husband was very cruel, inhuman and materialistic. This was shown in their different attitudes, particularly their behaviours towards their baby.

At one stage the husband realised that the wife's breast milk had dried up. He accused the wife for drinking all the milk. The wife said it was the husband who drank all the milk and because she was starving, the milk had dried up:

Koum Alors, explique moi que ton lait ait tari.

Nam Cela fait si longtemps que je crie famine!

Koum Famine? Mais tu têtes à satiété!

Nam Tu sucres tout! Quand arrive mon tour, il n'y a plus rien...C'est toi qui bois tout le lait, rend-toi à l'évidence.

Koum rushed to the shop and purchased bread. His intention was to feed the wife so that the breast milk could flow. He was not feeding the wife because of humanitarian reasons, but because he wanted the breast milk to flow so that he would sell it and continue to receive money.

He returned to his flat, untethered the wife and threw the bread on the floor. After the woman had eaten, she went to the room and found her baby dead. The baby

was her only hope. The child's death was a great loss to the wife since the baby was the only thing which brought her happiness:

Nam Qu'y a-t-il? Est-mort? Mon Dieu, je le savais!...Tu l'as tué! Tu as bu son lait...Assassin, meurtrier!

Koum used the revenue from the sales of the wife's breast milk to purchase an expensive French suit. The wife was astonished when she saw the beautiful suit. She touched it in total amazement. Nam secretly opened Koum's suitcase and found two air tickets for Madame et Monsieur:

Nam Qu'elle est belle! Elle est vraiment du meilleur goût. Le tissu en est précieux. Où a-t-il pu acquérir un article d'une telle qualité, et surtout, comment a-t-il pu?...Il n'y a toujours rien à manger à la maison...Quelle vie? Je n'en sais rien...Deux billets d'avion! Deux! Il y a du voyage en l'air, et surtout, il y a de l'argent beaucoup puisque ces billets vont jusqu'en Europe...

Nam thought the tickets were for her and her husband. But the husband said they were for him and his mistress:

Nam J'ai portant bien vu un deuxième billet d'avion.

Koum Si tu l'avais examiné plus attentivement...

Nam L'un portait ton nom, l'autre le mien.

Koum Il n'y a ton nom nulle part ici.

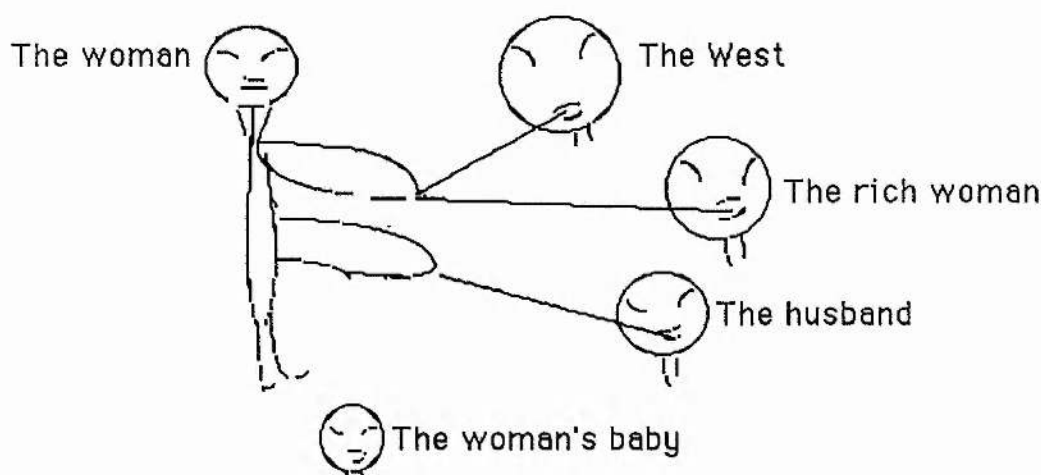
Nam was dumbfounded. She said the husband got money from the sales of her breast milk, and should not treat her unfairly. Nevertheless, when she realised that the husband was determined to take another woman to Europe, she regretted the fact that she had not benefited from the sales of her breast milk:

Nam C'est mon lait, mon sang qui t'a donné cet argent...et pour le moment, je ne veux plus puisque je ne tire aucun bénéfice de l'argent ainsi gagné...

At this juncture, the women who watched the play were angry and they gave a literal interpretation of the play. They made several suggestions. Some, indeed, said the wife should tear the tickets and the husband's suit. Others maintained that the wife should prevent the husband from leaving the house, while others asserted that men exploited women for their own benefit, but that the wife was extremely calm. These women in the audience who saw the exploitation of women in its widest dimension

were the feminists. On the whole, the audience was divided. Female members of the audience identified themselves with the wife, whilst male members of the audience said that the man was acting without thought. The wife who represented women was portrayed as the victim of the global economic exploitation in the sense that her breast milk was exploited by her husband for his benefit, the benefit of the rich woman and the West. See illustration.

Fig 7 The woman is the victim of the global economic exploitation



(Another theme of this play is examined in chapter five. In this chapter, I am concerned with the portrayal of women and the response of the audience to this particular theme).

By portraying a woman as the victim of the global economic system, the playwright concurs with the assertions of other thinkers that although the woman is symbolically a source of life (in the sense that she produces children and looks after people) she has remained the victim of men. Most of the women portrayed in these performances suffered a similar fate to that of women in other communities. For example, Chagnon reports that among the Yanomamo, men make it known that their wives must deliver sons or suffer the consequences (Chagnon cited in Sanday 1981: 45, 195). Thus women kill female infants or allow them to starve to avoid disappointing their husbands. Also Lindenbaun reports that among the New Guinea people, widows are killed within 24 hours after the death of their husbands in order to evade over-population (Lindenbaun cited in Sanday 1981: 195).

The playwright is a revolutionary urging women to fight for their rights and asking them to put a halt to the exploitation. However, most women who are subjected

to exploitation are those without economic means. Thus in order for women to liberate themselves from men's grip, women should endeavour to acquire economic means. We noted in chapter two in the Women Centre's Play that the protagonist (Emeli) of the play resorted to acquiring western education as a means of attaining economic independence. Women's financial dependency on men perpetuates their being exploited. The playwright is suggesting that through an attainment of their rights, women can actively participate in the country's progress.

Much information about Doho's Le Crâne has been provided in chapter three. One of the major themes of this play centres around the active participation of women in public politics. In this performance when the leader of the village named Tatang was in desperation, anger and frustration, he called for the first wife, Mafo. He wanted her support during this period of political tumult:

Tatang Mafo, depuis que les tam-tams dans ce bois sacré annoncent le jour du
transfert du crâne de mon père, je ne ferme plus les yeux pendant la
nuit.

Female members of the audience were indeed pleased when Tatang called for Mafo and sought her advice. Although Tatang was portrayed in the performance as uncaring leader, the women laughed and clapped. On the other hand, men who watched the performance remained mute. Perhaps they thought that Mafo would have little advice to offer.

I suggest that the people of Tatou village did not consider women as feeble second class citizens. Thus when Tatang found himself in the midst of emotional crisis and political instability, he sought Mafo's advice. Moreover, the women did not think that men were the ones who could make the right decisions. Thus when Mafo was called to advise her husband, she revealed all her thoughts concerning the matter. She knew that the husband was the leader but this did not stop her from pointing out his great mistake:

Mafo (Très calmement). Sa Majesté...La file de tes ancêtres, le fleuve en furie, ton
père qui te ne prend pas la main. Majesté, tout cela n'est pas bon présage...Ce
rêve, Majesté est un mauvais présage...très mauvais présage...

In this performance Miaik (Desou's mother) was portrayed as a political activist. She was very interested in the welfare of the state and because of this, she advised Desou (her son and the half-brother of Tatang; he was also Tatang's political rival who had just returned from exile) to avoid political ambition. Desou and his two friends were discussing politics. During the conversation, they said that since Desou returned from exile, the village politics had been unstable. They talked of an imminent disaster, particularly in view of the ominous signs that it rained and thundered, and the river made turbulent noise. In this community, rain and thunder were bad omens. The friends advised Desou to stand for the post of leadership and to make his plans known to the villagers. They maintained that his mother was from the royal lineage and therefore he had a chance of winning.

Maiak who had eavesdropped on the conversation intervened. She rebuked her son's friends for persuading Desou to stand for the office. She added that their imprudent advice would only bring the village into chaos. She advised Desou to behave properly, to be modest, and above all, to avoid political ambition:

Maiak Dis-le ah Kwetse. Dis-lui que tu n'en veux pas. Dis lui que tu n'es pas...Oui mon fils laisse lui l' ambition. Oh laisse la lui...

Maiak understood that political ambition (particularly ambition for leadership) could sometimes have inexplicable draw backs. Thus she did not want her son to get involved. Furthermore, she did not want political instability to become a feature of Tatou's politics.

At this point when Maiak advised the son against politics, the male members of the audience were silent. They must have understood that women could give prudent advice during a period of political turmoil. The women present merely sighed.

We noted in chapter three that Tatang refused to negotiate with his political rivals. Thus because Tatang refused to listen to the people, Ngouala (one of the chief-makers in the village) persuaded Mafo to act as a mediator between Desou and Tatang so that political stability could be restored. He insisted that if Desou refused to listen to Mafo, the latter should consult Maiak. He added that Maiak would give prudent advice. Mafo believed that a woman could not dissuade Desou to leave ambition aside for the

benefit of the village. In spite of her argument, she carried out the assignment as she was told:

Ngnouala Vas voir Desou, et s' il ne veut pas fermer les yeux, sur les actes de son frère, qu'il entende son coeur, battre pour son propre sang...Allez voir Desou...Vas voir Desou ce soir; ou si tu ne peux tenir en sa présence, parle donc à la mère...Oui Maiak est la mère. Ses paroles sont comme les premières gouttes de lait.

Mafo Mais souffriront-il de me voir? Ah pauvre de moi!... Dire à Desou de renoncer à ses ambitions!

Again, women who watched this scene were indeed pleased when the male characters thought women could act as intermediaries between the contesting brothers. The audience was dead silent as every one was very attentive.

The above dialogue portrayed women as active politicians in this community. We noted earlier that Tatang sought Mafo's advice. Once again Mafo was assigned to carry out a political duty, and was asked to seek Maiak's assistance.

However, after Mafo and Maiak had failed to convince Desou to abandon his ambitions, Maiak thought Desou had betrayed her, and she committed suicide. Fodabnet believed that Maiak died to save the village from an imminent disaster, hence her death was a sacrifice for peace:

Fodabnet Prends-le à deux mains et montre à tous l'amour d'une pauvre femme qui s'est sacrifiée pour que la vie continue.

Female members of the audience were sad when Maiak died. Some said 'Why is she dead?' Nevertheless, they were happy that the women characters in the play were given prominent roles during the era of political instability. They said that if they were given a chance to participate in national politics, they would do better than the female characters portrayed in the performance. By contrast, the men said very few women would give good advice and also sacrifice their lives for the benefit of the country. But they added that if the women in real life could emulate the women characters in the play, then there would be some hope. I have already mentioned that this play was written and performed during the period of political instability in the country.

Doho portrays women as people who take active part in national politics. He is implicitly calling on the Cameroon woman to participate in politics. In contrast, Abega in his Le Sein t'est Pris, calls on women to put a halt to exploitation. Women should fight for their rights. They should not allow men to exploit them. Given that women are a source of life and very caring, they will contribute immensely to a community's progress if they put a halt to men's exploitation.

4. C. CONCLUSION.

It is obvious in the discussion that one of the main concerns of national performances was to call on the Cameroon women to participate in the country's socio-economic, political and cultural issues. The fictitious women in the performances were given the chance to participate in politics in their respective villages. In this respect, they expressed their political opinions. But in real life, the Cameroon woman is not allowed to participate in men's politics.

Some women have formed groups such as njangi groups where they exercised a degree of administrative and judicial power. Women do not feature in men's politics. Perhaps the women who are members of CPDM party exercise a significant degree of political power. Even then, they have to reckon with their male counterparts' attitude towards them. For example, we noted in chapter two that even the CPDM Sub-Section President in Mundemba whom people thought of as having political power in national politics used theatre to deal with an issue in Mundemba. This implied that even women who were members of the government have limited powers in politics. Perhaps, the government has given them these posts with the intention of pleasing women.

Furthermore, the fact that women have not been given the posts of divisional officers and chiefs, is a clear indication that the men still have a low opinion about women's sense of responsibility in the political domain. Thus the women could not participate in national politics as the performances requested. This explained why the women in Mundemba and Mfou Sub-Divisions used theatre as one of the means through which they could express political opinions. The women who watched the different performances were anxiously looking forward to the period when men will genuinely allow them to participate in national politics.

Although these playwrights have mixed feelings towards women's participation in national politics in the sense that none of the fictitious women is a leader in her respective region, the playwrights respect the rights of women. In this changing landscape (where a multi-party system has been introduced and the country's economy is gradually becoming decentralised) the woman should be poised to march forward and never backward. In this respect, the playwrights are not sparing any effort aimed at

giving the women a higher social status. In a nutshell, if politicians take a similar view to that of the playwrights, then the future looms with optimism as efforts would incessantly be carried out to ensure that women become politically, culturally, and economically conscious and thus contribute to the country's progress. However, as noted in the discussion, female members of the respective audiences believed that this call on women to participate in national politics was not genuine, because female characters in the performances were either sacrificed for the well-being of their respective countries or were not given enviable posts such as leadership. The playwrights who are all men still believe that women should not be trusted with the leadership posts. Perhaps the women who watched these performances believed that the men should do more.

5

¹ Mboysi was not the first brave woman to be portrayed in an African play. In *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, by Ngugi and Mugo the playwrights portray a woman who fights together with revolutionary leaders against colonialism.

² This reminds us about the meeting between God and Sarah in the Old Testament. It is written in the Old Testament that when God in the form of three persons appeared to Abraham and Sarah, He promised that Sarah at the age of ninety would have a son, but Sarah laughed because she doubted God's word. (Genesis chapter 19). Women have always been sceptical, and Butake portrays this in this scene.

³ In one of Butake's play, *The Lake God*, the playwright shows how the women of Nyos intervene in the region's politics when the men fail to establish political stability, which is the embryo of social contentment and economic progress. The women resort to a strike, and their strategy is to refuse their husbands entry into their bedrooms and to cease giving men food. The women's actions have an effect and the men become frustrated. Men live solely on palm-wine, roasted plantains and cocoyams. They realize that the women have also resorted to a sex strike. According to men, this strike is a greater punishment than all the region's misfortunes put together. Eventually they unanimously agree to dethrone the *fon*. In this respect, the women's strategy is effective since men comply to the women's demands. Thus Nyosian women use all the available weapons to make their political views known to the community.

⁴ Butake holds a similar opinion with Bate Besong. In Bate Besong's *Requiem For The Last Kaiser*, Ahkikrikii (the leader of Agidigi) refuses to associate with the masses and act in accordance with their actual needs and wishes. Because Ahkikrikii has a callous disregard for his people, the women mobilise and incite all the different oppressed groups (such as unemployed and students) in the community to get rid of Ahkikrikii. The people prepare for the great gathering where they want to watch His Majesty die. They shout in unison:

ALL WE WANT NOTHING! WE HAVE COME TO HEAR YOU DIE!
ONLY YOUR BLOOD CAN CLEANSE THIS LAND! (sic).

Ahkikrikii picks up the loaded pistol and points into his own mouth. In this play Bate Besong shows how women can be very instrumental in motivating the people to overthrow a corrupt and irresponsible leader. Through the activities of the women and the leader of the market women, the dissatisfied groups (students, unemployed, workers, poets, including the security officers) force their leader to shoot himself.

5

CHAPTER FIVE

CULTURAL AND POLITICAL IDENTITIES IN NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.

[President Biya] wants to create in Cameroonians attitudes which will automatically rise to its defence whenever its existence is threatened or its sanctity challenged. He wants Cameroonians to cultivate an over-riding loyalty and attachment not to the tribe, or the ethnic group, but to the Cameroon nation...Cameroonians are first of all Cameroonians, before being Bameliki, Ewondo, Bakweri...Cameroonians are first of all Cameroonians, before being English-speaking or French-speaking...(Sam-Kubam and Ngwa-Nyamboli 1985: 39 - 40).

In this chapter I am concerned with cultural and political identities in Anglophone and Francophone national performances. The Anglophone national performances were primarily concerned with the Anglophone identities and secondly with the Cameroon identities. In contrast, Francophone national performances were solely interested in the Cameroon identities. In the conclusions of chapters one and two I showed that there are Britain's and France's political and cultural legacies in Cameroon. These legacies are impediments to genuine cultural and political unity between the Anglophone and Francophone zones. The legacies also thwart the realisation of a genuine Cameroon identity. This chapter examines how the Anglophone and Francophone national performances together with the audiences used languages, life-styles, attitudes, views of the world, style of dressing as means of depicting the respective cultural and political identities of the Anglophones, Francophones, Cameroon and developed countries. The chapter also investigates how audiences pinpoint distinct groups (the poor, the rich, the ruled, the rulers, the educated and non educated) in national performances.

Apart from Epie Ngome's For Better Or For Worse, all the performances examined in this chapter have already been discussed in chapters three and four. The performances include Eyoh's The Magic Fruit and Bate Besong's Beasts Of No Nation. References are made to Eyoh's The Inheritance and Bate Besong's The

Requiem For The Last Kaiser. Francophone national performances include Abega's Sens Unique and Le Sein t' est Pris. The chapter is divided into three sections. Section one analyses Anglophone national performances, section two focuses on Francophone National performances and section three is the conclusion.

5. A. CULTURAL AND POLITICAL IDENTITIES IN ANGLOPHONE NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.

As earlier indicated, Anglophone national performances were primarily concerned with an Anglophone identity and secondly with the Cameroon identity. The chapter begins by looking at the performance For Better Or For Worse, which is primarily concerned with the Anglophone identity and later the performances The Magic Fruit and Beasts of No Nation, which are specifically interested with both Anglophone and Cameroon identities, will be examined.

Epie Ngome's For Better Or For Worse is an allegorical play based on the historical, socio-economic, political and cultural background of the Anglophone community. The play is concerned with the Anglophone plight. Epie Ngome uses the metaphor of a domestic conflict to portray the plight of the Anglophone community. This play describes the different processes of the reunification between former French and British Cameroons and the effects of the unification on the Anglophones. However, in order to grasp the message of the play, certain historical facts are provided time and again.

The plot of Epie Ngome's For Better Or For Worse evolves around a young girl named Weka (an acronym for West Cameroon or Kamerun, the former British or Southern Cameroon). Weka is a young girl whose parents (United Nations Organisations) died when she was still a child. Before Weka's parents died, they left her in an orphanage (Britain) and made Reverend Gordon (the orphanage administrator) promised that he would look after Weka and also choose a good husband for her. When Weka reaches puberty, Reverend Gordon forces her to choose between two suitors, Emeka (Nigeria) and Garba (French Cameroon). Weka reluctantly accepts Garba as her lawful husband. However, following Weka's reluctance to agree to the

marriage, a period of probation is provided by Reverend Udor who conducts the marriage ceremony. Weka faces problems in her marriage, thus she returns to her late father's home. Garba's efforts to persuade her to return to his house fail, so he takes the matter to court. However, after the judge has listened to Garba and Weka, he grants a separation.

During the German's administration, the German officials, with the help of some fons and chiefs, brought together and consolidated the different ethnic groups into a single political entity through military expeditions. Furthermore during the era of British administration in Cameroon, British Cameroon was administered jointly with Nigeria. Thus British Cameroon and Nigeria shared the same colonial experience during the British administration (Ngoh 1988: 337). It is in this context that Weka is asked to choose between Garba and Emeka. Like Southern Cameroons, Weka is forced to make a choice between Garba and Emeka. The historical situation of the Anglophone and Francophone Cameroons is thus represented metaphorically in the play in terms of the marriage of Weka and Garba. The subsequent separation, however, represents political aspiration rather than historical fact.

Sketches of Victor Epie' Ngome's For Better Or For Worse have been broadcasted over the radio and televised during the CRTV literary hour. Also the play was performed on stage by the Flame Players (an Anglophone Troupe based in Yaounde) in the British Council in March 1992. The troupe renamed the play What God Has Put Asunder. According to the actors and actresses together with the directors of this play, the play was performed five times in the space of one week. They maintained that British council was too small to accommodate the number of people who turned out to watch the play. In order to ensure that everyone who wanted to watch the play had a chance to do so, the last performance was enacted at Amphi 700 in the University of Yaounde.

The performance opened with the introduction of the suitors by Sister Sabath (one of the administrators in the orphanage). She skilfully introduced the subject of marriage to Weka. Even though Weka protested against the idea of getting married, Sister Sabath outwitted Weka when the latter finally accepted to marry Garba instead of

Emeka. Act two described the marriage ceremony. The scene was enacted in a church where Weka reluctantly accepted Garba to be her lawful husband:

Unor Weka, do you accept Miche Garba as your wedded husband, to love and to cherish, to have and to hold, to honour and obey; in sickness or in health, for richer or for poorer, for better or for worst? If so be your decision, say, Yes, I do. (Long pause. Weka remains silent. Her head bowed).

Sabeth (In a reproachful whisper) Weka please, say something.
Please, don't embarrass us.

Weka (Struggling not to cry) But I don't even know the man, Sister Sabeth.

Sabeth Please, darling, let's not start this over again. What is so hard in just saying 'Yes I do'?

What was suggested here was that neither the United Nations, Britain nor inexperienced Cameroon politicians really cared about the future of West Cameroon. The parties concerned only cared for a quick and speedy resolution of the Southern Cameroons issue. This was dramatised by Weka's plight:

Weka (Raises her head and looks at Garba. Then shakes her head) Sister Sabeth, something tells me I can't trust this man. (Pause) I just wonder if someone here cares what happens if he turns mean later. What seems to matter is for me to say Yes I do. 'Okay. Yes, I do'.

Joice Ashu Tatang who was the assistant director of this play maintained that when Weka said 'Okay. Yes, I do', the audience which was made up of mostly Anglophones sighed and said 'weh'(an expression of sadness). She added that the audience behaved as though it was watching actual historical facts on stage, and the plight of Weka represented the Anglophone plight.

The marriage between Garba and Weka (French Speaking Cameroon and English Speaking Cameroon) was established. However, following Weka's reluctance, a period of probation was provided.

After the marriage, Garba became lord over Weka's property as a result of their marriage settlement. However, in spite of the fact that Weka brought a lot of wealth to

her husband, she was cheated, neglected and moreover, the property was not looked after. What Garba was interested in was to harvest the produce and spend the money on his other wives and concubines. Weka became angry and disappointed. Thus she poured out her frustration:

Weka ...Now I am a wife. And not just any wife. But one who brought you a lot of wealth. By marrying me - if one can call it marriage - you became lord and master over the cocoa farms my father left me.

Garba And now what?

Weka And now you harvest [the produce] from them like a thief. No pruning of the trees, no weeding of the farms themselves; not even clearing the road thereto. And when you sell the produce, nobody knows where the proceeds go.
(Sighs).

Joice Ashu Tatang asserted that at the end of this episode, there was commotion in the auditorium. Some members of the audience said 'na true oh' (it was true). The audience declared that the Francophones were solely interested in exploiting the natural resources in the Anglophone region. The Francophones did not develop the Anglophone region and did not bother about the well-being of the Anglophones. The performers on stage together with the audience were reiterating the views first expressed by local performing artists in the Bima region and city theatre practitioners in Mundemba city, all in the Anglophone zone. In chapters one and two, the Bimas and Mundemba local theatrical performing artists used theatre to draw the government's attention to the fact that the latter exploited the natural resources in Mundemba Sub-Division, yet it refused to develop the region. Village, city and national theatre practitioners' similar views about the political relationship between Francophone and Anglophone suggested the views of Anglophones.

It is worth noting that the South West Province (one of the two provinces that make up the Anglophone zone) is one of the richest provinces in Cameroon. It cultivates great quantities of food crops (cocoyams, plantains, yams, all kinds of vegetables, potatoes, groundnuts and other crops) which are consumed in other parts of the country. Also, Cameroon's oil is extracted from Limbe in the South-West Province. Furthermore, Cameroon Development Corporation which cultivates rubber,

tea, palm-trees, banana and many other crops is located in Ndian, Meme and Fako Divisions, all in the South-West Province. Moreover, cocoa and coffee are cultivated in large quantities in the South and North West Provinces. Because Cameroon, like most developing countries, depends to a great extent on income from exported agricultural produce, Anglophones believe that their region is exploited by the nation. They justify their complaints by pointing out that the Anglophone region is less developed in terms of the location of industries and the absence of tarred roads, equipped hospitals, recreational and other facilities in all the regions. It is from this perspective that Weka accused Garba of exploitation.

The fourth scene began with Emeka and Weka. Emeka regretted that Weka opted to marry Garba instead of him and pitied Weka in her present situation. This performance was not the first to point out that the Anglophone zone was the victim of the reunification. Many observers such as West Africa's itinerant correspondent for Francophone Africa and some Anglophone Cameroonians (for instance, Naweri) have pointed out that the Anglophone zone is worse off today than it was before reunification in 1961 (Naweri cited in Kofele-Kale 1986: 53 -83).

Weka admitted that the marriage had not been successful and that her efforts to co-operate with Garba were fruitless:

Weka Sister Sabath told me that that quite often it takes a good woman to pull a wayward man together. I don't pretend to be a good woman, but somehow that is the mini-miracle I have been trying all that long to bring about for Garba. But with a phenomenon like him, it's plain pointless.

Weka clearly pointed out that the Anglophones were determined to co-operate with the Francophones. In spite of the Anglophones' efforts, this desire seemed to be permanently unattainable because the Francophones were more inclined to co-operate with France instead. This notion that the Anglophone community had tried tirelessly to work hand in hand with the Francophone but had failed is reiterated in a subsequent performance.

Weka also maintained that Garba received instructions from Louis, (representative of France, precisely the President of France) but he prevented her children from practising her British cultural heritage:

Weka Garba does nothing without asking Louis first. Would you believe, for instance, that Garba lets Louis keep his money for him and cannot buy anything without Louis' blessing?...He has been forcing my children to learn his own mother tongue [French language] and to forget mine [English language] with which they grew up; I must abide by the customs of his clan [French culture], not mine [British culture].

A member of the troupe maintained that the audience said Francophones, specifically, the middle class Francophones believed that France was their home, and thus it was normal for Francophones to receive orders from the Presidents of France. She said the audience was more in sorrow than in anger. The audience blamed Anglophone politicians and the parties (particularly Britain) concerned for persuading ¹ Southern Cameroon to join French Cameroon.

The Anglophone politicians watch French Cameroon politicians loyalty to France's Presidents in great dismay and frustration. To ensure that Anglophones' cultural and political identities are not completely annihilated, Anglophone politicians have formed an organization known as Cameroon Anglophone Movement (CAM). According to them:

We Southern Cameroon [English-speaking Cameroonians] affirm our conviction that the only workable political arrangement between la Republique du Cameroon [former French Cameroon] and Southern Cameroons is the Federal structure comprising the state of West Cameroon and the state of East Cameroon in conformity with the spirit of the 1961 constitution of the Federal Republic of Cameroon (Anon).

The Chairman, Ambassador Epie of CAM wrote an open letter to all the Anglophones, in which he emphasised:

History teaches us that our Francophone partners in the union are incapable of working for a long term ideal. They are incapable of sustaining the rigours of real change. They are unreliable. They do not know what justice is. They depend on the dictates of the French. They want independence, but they are incapable of fighting for it. They might want justice but have no stomach to fight for it (Epie 1992: 3).

According to my informants, the audience was dead silent. The countenance of the audience expressed profound sadness that the Francophones ignored many of the good values in the British culture. The audience regretted the fact that Francophones were

determined to destroy the English culture. The performers on stage and the audience articulated the opinions of a significant number of the Anglophone politicians. The chairman and the National Secretary General (Mukong) of CAM wrote:

For the past ten years, we have watched the suffering of the Southern Cameroons with legitimate consternation and utter bewilderment at the continuing conspiracy by La République du Cameroun [former French Cameroon] and its French neo-colonial masters to annihilate the surviving aspects of Anglo-Saxon culture in Anglophone Cameroon. While the Anglo-Saxon legal system is just barely holding out an envious [position in the country] La République du Cameroun has vowed to destroy our superior Anglo-Saxon educational system. We recall with justifiable anger the repeated shameful attempts by the Biya regime to abolish the GCE; attempts heroically defeated by our valiant secondary school and university students with the total support of all Anglophone parents. Having failed woefully to do away with GCE through a frontal attack, La République du Cameroun decided to achieve the same goal by indirect means, that is, by studiously mismanaging the GCE as to thoroughly discredit it (Mukong 1992: 1).

One of the messages of the performance reminded Anglophones to preserve the British cultural and political heritage. This preservation would endow the Anglophones with distinct cultural and political identities.

To return to the performance, Weka pointed out that she did not regret the choice, because Emeka had been constantly involved in domestic issues (coup d' etats). She added that her desire was to remain single (autonomous) instead of rushing into a marriage with either of them (Garba or Emeka):

Emeka I swear that everything would have been different.

Weka If I had married you instead? But it happened that you have had a succession of domestic strives yourself in the past couple of years. And of the most violent and bloody kind, I'm told. Well, it could, perhaps, have been different with me, as you say who knows? But that's quite another kettle of fish now...I had wanted to be on my own when I left the orphanage twenty years ago.

Emeka hid in the backyard when he noticed the approach of Reverend Gordon (the representative of Britain) and his friend Jim (an American representative). Reverend Gordon regretted the fact that he sanctioned the marriage between Weka and Garba. He also made an apology for his failure to make his presence felt in Weka's home as

Monsieur Louis (a representative of France) did in Garba's home. Reverend Gordon and Jim advised Weka to purchase their ammunition which she might use to protect herself and her children from Garba (French Cameroon) and Emeka (Nigeria). They added that considering Weka's appalling experience with Garba, they would lend her ammunition. Weka meekly declined the offers. Reverend Gordon and Jim advised Weka to cultivate large quantities of cash crops. They assured her of their commitment to purchase her agricultural produce. Once again, Weka said she adored their advice, but considering the price they offered for her agricultural produce, she preferred to grow food crops for herself and her family:

- Gordon You need to think of a market before you start producing again.
- Weka You are right, Reverend Gordon, but who says I will go on producing cocoa?
- Jim Why not? I can buy up whatever you produce.
- Weka Jim, I must say it's been waiting too long for a friend like you to show up. But at what price would you buy?
- Jim Depends. About a million Cameroon francs (CFA) per tonne. Good price, isn't it?
- Weka Well...and for how long? And then if I compare that with what you charge for a bar of chocolate...In fact, Jim, my children seem to think we should rather grow corn, yams and plantains. That way even if we can't sell our produce at any time, we can eat it.

The idea that the trade between south and north (developing and developed countries) was based on unequal terms was raised in Abega's Sens Unique in chapter three. These performances expressed the ideas of economists and politicians. For example, after reviewing the works of Amin, Frank and so on, Ankie stressed that the terms of trade immensely disfavours developing countries (Ankie 1987: 171-215).

According to Joice Ashu Tantang, the audience applauded and was pleased with Weka's decision. They maintained that the money they received for the sales of their cash crops was too little, compared with the cost of producing the cash crops. She added that the audience responded in this way because the play was performed at the time the government had received farmers' cash crops but was unable to pay farmers as

a result of the economic crisis. I will add that although the audience which watched this performance was made up of city dwellers who were not farmers, the majority of the audience had relatives who were farmers. Hence, when farmers were not paid for their produce, the city dwellers were obliged to give money to their parents in villages. Therefore the plight of farmers also affected civil servants, businessmen and so on. Perhaps this was the reason why this scene appealed to an audience made up of the middle class, businessmen and so on in the city.

In chapter one, the farmers at Esoki Bima (in the Anglophone zone) maintained that they had started chopping their cocoa and coffee trees because the government had not paid for their produce. In this play, Weka and her children (the representatives of the Anglophone community) had opted to produce food crops rather than cash crops because the money they received from the sales of their cash crops was not much of a compensation for their labour. This suggested that English-speaking Cameroonians did not want to labour for the benefit of privileged groups (the ruling class and the West) and strongly believed in self-reliance.

Weka noticed Garba's approach and advised Reverend Gordon and Jim to visit her backyard since Garba was a beast and could inflict physical injury on Reverend Gordon and Jim. Garba entered the house and threatened to beat Weka if she refused to return to her matrimonial home. Weka insisted on remaining in her deceased father's house. Garba was angry and thus slapped her. Weka screamed and her scream attracted the attention of her children, Emeka, Reverend Gordon and Jim. They all rushed into the house to rescue Weka.

The actors and actresses together with the directors and producers of this play maintained that the audience expressed sighs of relief. According to them, the play was suggesting that if Anglophone Cameroon intended to secede, Nigeria, Britain and USA would be firmly on the Anglophone side. It is questionable whether Nigeria, Britain and USA would actually endorse Anglophone secessionist desires. This question has preoccupied many Anglophone politicians. It should be remembered that this play was performed at the time when Presidential candidates were zealously campaigning for support from the population. This scene depicted a political message. If the Francophones failed to reconsider the views of Anglophones, then, the ultimate result

would be for the Anglophones to secede. If the situation came to this stage, Nigeria, Britain and USA would support Anglophone Cameroonians.

It has already been mentioned that following Weka's reluctance to accept Garba as her wedded husband, a period of probation of ten years was provided. However, in spite of the problems Weka faced in her marriage, Garba celebrated a happy tenth anniversary without Weka's consent. Attention should be drawn to the fact that after French and Southern Cameroons (former West Cameroons) reunited, they operated under different cultural systems. For example, there were four assemblies - the Federal Assembly, the East Cameroon Assembly, the West Cameroon Assembly and the House of chiefs in West Cameroon. According to former President Ahidjo, the system consumed money and time, and retarded development. Consequently, they were to be abolished in preference to a single assembly. In order to abolish these hindrances, the country was to operate under a unitary system, rather than the federal system. Consequently, Ahidjo adroitly led Anglophones to accept a unitary state (Ngoh 1988: 267). Thus, Late President Ahidjo, the smart wizard in the art of politics, easily cajoled the less sophisticated Anglophone leaders into a deal that snatched the Anglophones' basic liberties, compromised their bargaining powers and to date, has reduced them to second rate citizens. Thus Garba, like Ahidjo, celebrated a happy and peaceful tenth anniversary without Weka's consent. This was clear in her responses to the judge's questions during the divorce proceedings:

Judge (To Weka)...But when you settled in with him, and noticed this deceit, it seems you did not raise a finger either.

Weka I felt there was no need protesting before the end of the common law status [end of probation period], he brings us all together - with his other women and throws a lavish party to fete our ten years together. In the heat of the euphoria he rises and harangues the assembly. 'We are all a happy family, aren't we?' And all those women, some of them quite drunk answered with a deafening 'Yes, we are'. We shall continue to be one indivisible and happy family, shan't we? He goes on. And they all hoot back, 'yes we shall'. Thank you all my wives and children, he said, beaming with satisfaction. 'Now

confirm what you just said by raising your hands' And the throng raised their hands including guests - and he counted them all (sic).

After listening to Weka's side of the story, the judge passed a verdict in favour of separation. He also ordered Garba to respect Weka, as failure to do so would eventually necessitate the courts' intervention.

During an interview in January 1993 with Gwangwa, the director of the play, he asserted that after the verdict had been passed (by Butake who played the role of the judge), there were shouts of joy as members of the audience thought that they had momentarily achieved their greatest political desire; separation from the Francophones. Also, when the judge repeated the new title of the play What God Has Put Asunder, the audience concluded 'Let No One Put Together' implying that God had put apart Francophones and Anglophones but the Francophones were intentionally forcing a unity. I did not watch this play on stage. Perhaps, if I had done so, I would have had a lot to say about the performance. The audience's reactions which I have included were related to me during a series of interviews in December 1992 with members of the Flame Players and people who watched the play on stage.

The fictitious verdict in favour of separation logically implied that the Anglophone region could secede from the Francophone one. The playwright reiterated an idea first formulated by Jua (former Prime Minister of West Cameroon in the 1960s) and the political actors in west Cameroon who wanted a federal Cameroon with two nations, whereas their counterparts in east Cameroon were more inclined to create a single central government. The latter group achieved their ambition for, as Forje asserted:

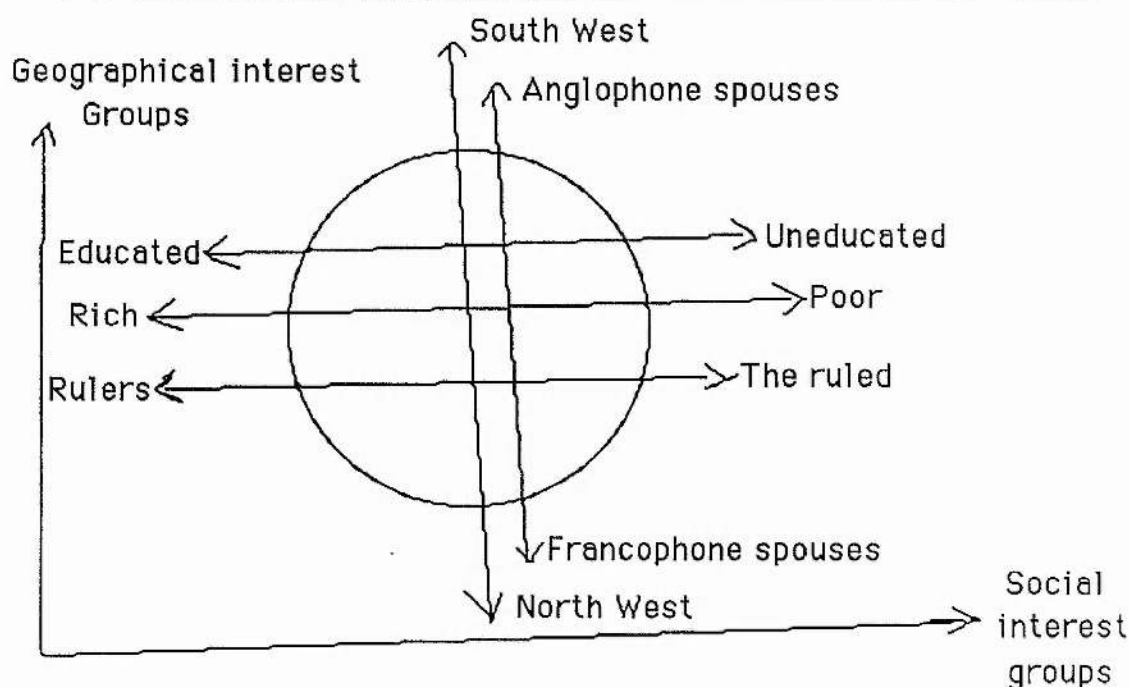
Cameroon is one and indivisible, and in spite of its cultural diversity, there is an overwhelming acquiescence with orientations to the symbolic sub system of the political culture - the flag, the national anthem and the institution of the presidency remain the unchangeable metaphor of the nation (Forje 1981: 154).

In spite of performance's call for secession and the audience's positive emotional and intellectual response, the audience could not concretise this call due to several reasons. The relationship between the South-West and North West-Province (the two provinces that make up the Anglophone zone) is sour. The grievances of the South-West Province against the North-West Province are more profound than the

general grievances of the Anglophones against the Francophones. For example, the South-West elites have formed a South-West Elites Association (SWELA) to protect the South-Westerners' interests against those of the North-Westerners. This association prohibits intermarriages between North-Westerners and South-Westerners. Furthermore, those from the South-West claim that the North-West has received better treatment from the Central Government because the two Vice Presidents of the Ahidjo regime, and the three West Cameroon Prime Ministers (Foncha, Jua and Muna and the late Achidi in Biya's second Republic) since independence, have all come from the North-West Province. They question why it should be so and ask whether the North-Westerners are the only Anglophones in the country.

Judging from the South-Westerners' grievances against the North-Westerners, this performance's secessionist gesture, which suggested that secession was possible, was a vain hope. If the policy was possible, the South Westerners would have insisted on having a separate nation from the North West Province.

Another important fact was that despite the call of For Better Or For Worse that Anglophones should unite and protect the Anglophone interest, there were other interest groups in the audience. The illiterate masses conceived the message in simple terms. The people simply understood that Epie Ngome wanted the Anglophone government to be back in Buea. Justification for this position was found in their recollection of how things used to be when they had their government in Buea. Simple, clear, straightforward. No splitting of hairs. For the literate and educated, however, there was debate and polemic over the secessionist gesture. The debate was so ridiculous that members of the audience missed the point entirely. Epie Ngome's message erroneously conflicted with perceived personal interests. People were afraid for their posts. Those who had invested in la République du Cameroon (Francophone zone) were afraid of their investment. Anglophone spouses of Francophones feared an Anglophone-Francophone conflict. Others thought they would not have the chance to work in the French Zone. The most serious case, however, was the group of assimilated Anglophones who felt uncomfortable identifying themselves as Anglophones. They were ashamed of their identity and preferred to melt in the whole. Below is a diagram illustrating the various interest groups within the Anglophone community:

Fig 8 Diverse interest groups within the Anglophone community

As the above illustration shows, there are distinct diverse interest groups within the Anglophone community. The message of this play re-entitled What God Has Put Asunder did not appeal to these various groups. I stated in chapter one that a play which demanded people to take action must suggest the concomitant advantages of the required actions. For example, the Bima chiefs responded positively to the praise-singer's performance because they wanted the market to be located in the Bima region and not in a neighbouring region. Also, the Senior-Divisional Officer and the GHS administration responded positively to the GHS Mundemba's performance because they wanted to protect their respective posts.

Above all, President Paul Biya declared in Garoua on 4th May 1985 that Cameroonians were determined to fight steadfastly against anything that could undermine Cameroon's unity. Anything that provoked regionalism, sectarianism, tribalism, nepotism and ambition would not be accepted (Biya quoted in Sam-Kubam and Ngwa-Nyamboli 1985: 37).

Considering that there are various groups with diverse interests within the Anglophone community, together with the President's declaration, movements towards ideas about secession are illusory. This performance's plea for secession became unattainable.

The play's theme is historical, and describes the different stages of reunification between former British and French Cameroons, and the Anglophone frustration in the light of reunification. Epie Ngome's primary motive is to highlight the problems of the Anglophone community and to advocate secession.

Stylistically, the play is written in an allegorical manner but the style is straightforward. The audience's response was positive. As already indicated, those people who watched the play on stage in early 1992 maintained that the play highlighted controversial issues within the Anglophone community and the audience was divided. There were those who agreed that secession was the only solution to the Anglophone problem, while others preferred to fight for their rights within a united Cameroon. This latter group believed that Cameroon should be considered as a 'melting pot' of assimilated nationalistic ethnic groups. These divided opinions reflected the division that existed among the Anglophones.

Having discussed the performance that dealt exclusively with the Anglophone cultural and political identities, I will now direct my attention to the performances which argued that the Anglophone community should not think of secession. Rather, the Anglophone community should emulate the Irish American, the Polish American or the American Jew who while being American citizens, proudly assert their origins. This does not make them less American; on the contrary, it means they have something extra to offer to the the United States of America.

Besides other themes in Eyoh's play The Magic Fruit, the play also deals with Anglophone political identity. In order to depict the issue, Eyoh creates a scene centred around the problems of a polygamous family. A man dies and leaves his first wife (Mother 1) and her children together with those of his second wife (Mother 2) who escaped when he was alive. Mother 2 intends to look after her children. She accuses Mother 1 of jealousy and mischievous deeds, and claims that her children were not properly looked after. In response to these accusations, Mother 1 draws her attention to the fact that she tried to establish a good relationship with her but failed. The efforts of Mother 1 are similar to those of the Anglophones who believe that they are endeavouring without success to establish a good relationship with the Francophones :

Mother 1 God knows I tried, but you would not give me a chance.

This idea was expressed by Weka, the protagonist in Epie Ngome's For Better and for Worse. Mother 2 scolded, beat and insulted her children. By contrast, Mother 1 rallied the children in the evenings, gave them food and told them folktales. Because Mother 2 scolded and beat her children, they regretted the fact that she was their mother and added that she treated them badly whilst Mother 1 treated her children (including Mother 2's children) well. Therefore, the bad treatment they received was as a result of the fact that that they were half-brothers:

Son 1 Its getting late. We should be going home.

Son 2 Can I come with you? I 'm sure your mother wouldn't mind.

Son 1 Ours won't but how about yours?

Son 2 Ours, I wish she was not my mother. Your mother has always been kind to us. But ours, she 's simply a little tyrant. Can you believe she actually hit me with a cane today?...How I wished she [your mother] was also my mother.

Son 1 What I think is important is that we are brothers and sisters.

Son 2 Born of different mothers...

The audience got the implicit message and sighed. They understood that although the surface meaning of this episode depicted the problems of half-brothers, the secondary meaning concerned the discrimination between Anglophones and Francophones. During a discussion after the performance, some of the people who watched the play asserted that the two sons highlighted the friction between the Anglophone and Francophone. They maintained that Anglophones believed that they were discriminated against because they did not belong to the French community, and did not inherit the French culture.

During an interview with the playwright, he asserted that the Anglophone community was like Mother 1 who endeavoured zealously to work hand-in-hand with Mother 2 but failed, and also like Son 2 who was maltreated because he had a different mother. Therefore the Francophones were identified with Mother 2 and Son 1 (the privileged group) whilst Mother 1 and Son 2 represented the Anglophone (the less privileged group). There was a contradiction in Eyoh's grouping. Logically Mother 1 and her children made up a natural group whereas Mother 2 and her own children

constituted another natural group. I expected one of these groups (mother 1 and Son 1 or Mother 2 and Son 2) to represent the privileged group (the Francophone) whilst the other represented the disprivileged group (the Anglophone). Perhaps, Eyoh intentionally creates this contradiction to emphasize the fact that both groups have flaws. None is perfect.

The children of the second wife (Son 2 and Daughter 2) questioned why children whose mother was very healthy, should be treated like orphans:

How can we have a mother
And now be orphans?
How can we have a mother
And she is so unkind?
She tyrannises us.
She shouts at us always.

The question was why should Anglophones be treated metaphorically like orphans when they were also Cameroonians and when the Anglophone zone was blessed with human and natural resources. A Cameroon writer, Kofela-Kale does not agree with this assertion. He maintains that the Anglophone elites are represented in all branches of the government and party. Therefore he cannot reconcile the apparent ubiquity of the Anglophones' persistent claims that their region has been treated like the orphan of the Republic (Kofela-Kale 1980). It is true that the Anglophone elites who are independently wealthy, very well-educated and perfectly bilingual have transcended the Anglophone plight which afflicts the bulk (semi and uneducated) of the Anglophone population. However, it is worth noting that the playwright is reviewing the Anglophone issue in the light of the Cameroon context and he wants the Anglophone community to be treated as a specific case because the Anglophone zone reunited with the Francophone zone on the basis of equality. Thus Francophones should make Anglophones think of themselves as Cameroonians, such as the imagined communities described by Anderson (Anderson 1990).

Mother 2 wanted Son 2 (her son) to inherit his father's throne but her family has been cursed with insanity, and her son was ineligible to succeed his father. Mother 2 was furious on becoming aware of this fact. Meanwhile Mother 1 and all the children (including Mother's 2 children) intended to respect the deceased man's last wishes by visiting his village . Mother 2 did not want Mother 1 and her children to do so. She still

intended to persuade the villagers to enthrone her son. However, Son 2 was indifferent as to who was enthroned. They chanted a sad song asking how the matter could be resolved:

What do we do to get there?
 Anticipation of future time
 Sends sounds of gladness to my heart.
 Where do we go from here?
 What do we do to get there?

The audience gave their own interpretation of this song. They maintained that the song was asking how Francophone and Anglophone would blend their different cultural and political heritage and thus build a prosperous Cameroon. Given the underlying message of the song, perhaps the song was asserting that, at the period when the village was making an important political decision by choosing someone to succeed the late father of the two sons, Son 2 showed a callous attitude to the issue while expecting to secure Son 1's love. People changed, so in future, Son 1 might refuse to share their late father's property with Son 2. The performance was implicitly asserting that the Anglophone community, like Son 2, was also callous about the milestone era in the politics of Cameroon, when the country was experiencing political changes, and with the doors of liberty opening slowly. It is worth noting that Ni John Fru, an Anglophone from the North west Province was the First Cameroonian to challenge the one party-system in Cameroon by launching an opposition party to the Biya's government. Hence, to a remarkable extent, the Anglophones were not lying comfortably while expecting the Francophone to rescue them.

Perhaps the playwright is asserting that in the period when power is steadily slipping away from a one party-system, the Anglophones should seize the opportunity and assert the Anglophone identity once and for all. The Anglophones should not be contented with Ni Fru Ndi's Social Democratic Front (SDF), the only Anglophone popular political party in Cameroon. Justification for the playwright's plea was evident in the sense that the number of political parties which emerged in the Francophone zone after the launching of SDF proportionately outnumbered the number of political parties in the Anglophone zones (Cameroon Post No 57 February 1991: 1 and Day Dawn Vol. 5 No 9 August: 1990: 1).

The performers on stage proclaimed that if the Anglophone community remained callous like Son 2, it should not be surprised if, when the history of Cameroon's struggle for democracy would be written, it would not prominently feature in it. This would not be due to the Francophone disdain for Anglophones but mostly because of the Anglophones' reluctance to participate fully in politics. Already, the Anglophones complained bitterly that they were second class citizens. But Son 2's actions proved that it was a direct consequence of the Anglophones' weakness that made the Francophones ridiculed the Anglophone identity. The playwright deliberately exaggerates the Anglophones' indifference with the intention of motivating Anglophones to participate actively in the political drama by launching more political parties.

Alternatively, I will suggest that Son 2's attitude implied that the Anglophone community was more concerned with resolving the national political problem rather than with who should rule. For example, the Chairman of CAM asserted that:

...The Cameroon Anglophone Movement wishes to serve notice to the incumbent President of la République du Cameroon and to each of the presidential candidates in the race for the ETOUDI PALACE that irrespective of whoever wins that race, time has come to solve the Southern Cameroons (Anglophone) constitutional problem consequent upon the violation in 1972 of the Federal constitution of 1961(Epie 1992: 4).

From this point of view, Son 2 embodied the Anglophone community's popular traits : grandiose, noble and non-violent; but naive, unsuccessful divided people wishing to live together and in harmony with the Francophones.

The performance ended with a song calling on Cameroonians to live in peace.
 Go gently (thrice).
 People of our land.
 Hold your torches high above.
 Every where you go.
 Go gently gently, gently.

The audience was pleased with this performance as it ended with the half-brothers and all the members of the family together with the villagers chanting a song which called for peace. The song called for cultural and political unity and harmony in Cameroon.

Eyoh believes that in spite of the fundamental differences between Francophones and Anglophones, the two communities can live harmoniously. Eyoh is

advocating that the Anglophone community should assert its identity within the Cameroon context.

Eyoh's The Inheritance was performed at the Amphi 700 at the University of Yaounde by the Yaounde University Theatre Troupe in 1991. The plot of the play revolves around a woman Ma Mende who becomes pregnant by her illicit lover. In spite of the fact that the parents are fully aware of her pregnancy, they forced her to accept an arranged marriage. Her husband, Chief Epie Ngous receives her even though she is pregnant. She gives birth to a son whom she names Makia. Later she gives birth to a legitimate son and the child is named after her husband. Both Ma Mende and Chief Epie Ngous intentionally keep the circumstances surrounding the half-brothers' births a secret. On the death of the chief, Epie Ngous, the legitimate son succeeds his father. Makia is furious whilst Epie Ngous is surprised that he, the younger brother is chosen instead of his elder brother. The play describes how Chief Epie Ngous and Makia are treated differently because they have different fathers.

During a discussion between Ma Mende and Chief Epie Ngous, the mother admitted that the two sons could not have equal rights because they were half-brothers:

- Chief You know, mother, I have always thought that it had not been fair on our father's part to make me heir to the throne. Makia is my elder brother. I have always felt that I have cheated him through life.
- Ma Mende And if you abdicate, do you think that the throne will revert to him?
- Chief It ought to.
- Ma Mende My son! Don't make your father restless in his grave. Your father did only what he had to do. There are things that have been kept secret from you, but perhaps, before I die, I think I should let you know.
- Chief And what are these things mother?
- Ma Mende You see, Makia is really your elder brother, but only in so far as I am concerned.
- Chief I don't get you mother.
- Ma Mende I had his pregnancy before I got married to your father.

Eyoh implicitly emphasizes that, although Anglophones and Francophones are all Cameroonian citizens, they are treated differently because they inherited different

cultural values (the French and British legacies). This situation is not different from the Canadian experience wherein French and English cultures are keeping the French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians separate (Collins 1990: 103 -140). The title of the play, The Inheritance, corresponds with the message that one community has a privileged position over another. Moreover, the fact that Makia could not become the chief implied that an Anglophone could not become the President of the country. Eyoh's prophecy was justified by the fact that Cameroonians maintained that Ni Fru Ndi's Social Democratic Party won the Presidential election of 1992. West African Magazine, No 3934 wrote 'Ni Fru Ndi, Chairman of the Social Democratic Front (SDF), Biya's nemesis and, some assert, the real winner in Cameroon's recent controversial presidential election'.

The fact that the victory of Ni Fru Ndi (an Anglophone) was stolen suggested that, thirty years after reunification, the Anglophone community has been forced to accept, like the American Indians, its subordinate position in the country. It has been stripped of all the elements of its unique identity and all sense of what made the Anglophone community distinctive in the Republic of Cameroon. Perhaps, according to the playwright, the Anglophone should not accept a subordinate position. The Anglophone existence must be marked with a constant search for its own identity, a quest for recognition and for an enviable position such as the post of the President of the Republic of Cameroon. Living in a subordinate position but in harmony with his Francophone brothers is not enough.

To return to the play, Chief Epie Ngous believed that the dispute could be settled, thus he summoned a meeting of the village elders and family members to his premises. Eyoh believes that the enemies can resolve their problem. Thus Chief Epie Ngous called for a meeting for the purpose of reaching a compromise with his opponent. Eyoh is implicitly requesting that the Anglophones and Francophones should come together to settle their differences. He believes that, although the fundamental legacies of Britain and France have not been completely eradicated in Cameroon, these differences between Anglophones and Francophones should not hinder a bicultural progressive Cameroon nation emerging.

Eyoh is seeking to synthesize the Anglophones' and Francophones' cultures. Eyoh is one of the Cameroonians who believe that when English-speaking Cameroonians voted in a plebiscite in favour of reunion with French-speaking Cameroonians, the Anglophones genuinely wanted a bicultural progressive nation where the two cultures and politics should merge and promote national development.

Eyoh also believes that in the process of settling the disputes, both parties should send deputations because, if everyone is summoned, the meeting would become another 'Milton's Pandemonium', in Paradise Lost, where there is chaos because each of the fallen angels talks at the top of its voice. Eyoh believes that some people are natural rulers whilst others are not. Therefore rulers should represent their respective communities. Eyoh wants the Anglophones and the Francophones to reconcile their differences, merge the legacies of the former mandating countries and create a Cameroon which other countries will envy.

The audience was pleased with the messages of the play. I did not watch The Inheritance on stage. However those who watched The Magic Fruit and The Inheritance maintained that the messages of the two plays were identical.

The predominant theme in Eyoh's plays is discrimination between half-brothers, which implicitly refers to discrimination against Anglophones as a result of their British cultural and political heritage. Eyoh is instilling ideas into the young generation which could ruin a harmonious society, because the children would grow up with a preconception that Anglophones are maltreated in the country. Thus they would be too sensitive and critical on socio-economic, political and cultural issues. In this sense, Eyoh's plea that Anglophones and Francophones should arrive at a compromise is ambiguous since he is unintentionally separating the future generations.

Information about Bate Besong's Beasts Of No Nation has already been provided in chapter three. The crucial theme in this play is the search for an Anglophone identity and the portrayal of the Anglophone plight.

The play is set in a fictitious country called Ednuoay. The country is inhabited by two different groups who are explicitly identified as the the Francophones (the favoured) and the Anglophones (the less privileged). The leader of Ednuoay is Aadingingin (a torturer) whose brothers are cripples and blindmen. Whilst

Francophones have names such as Aadingingin, Blindman, Cripple, Otshama, which symbolise their individual identities, the Anglophones (except the Narrator) have no names. Instead, they are numbered; First, Second and Third as an indication that they do not have any identity as individuals.

The performance began with the Narrator (the spokesman of the Anglophone community) who dressed in a white garment, sat on a comfortable chair and asked rhetorical questions:

Narrator Do you know what you have done to me?...You have hurt me...You
 have come to him with your oceans of flattery...

Probably, these questions were directed to the Francophones. The Narrator who was the mouthpiece of the Anglophones blatantly accused the Francophones of flattery, thereby made false promises to Anglophones before the reunification. It is worth noting that before the reunification, in a speech delivered at Tiko (a region in the Anglophone zone) on 17th July 1960, Ahidjo (the President of French Cameroon), intimated that discussion on the issue of reunification would be undertaken freely and in an atmosphere of absolute equality between the representatives of la République du Cameroun and Southern Cameroons. A year after the reunification, in The Foumban Conference held in July 1961, Ahidjo proclaimed that he would accept the Anglophone's suggestions, but that he and his delegation (Francophone) would be the final arbiters of what would be accepted (Ngho 1990: 185, 220). Therefore he failed to respect the promises he had made before the reunification. Perhaps it was in this respect that the Narrator accused the Francophones of having failed to respect their promises.

The Narrator became furious when he turned and found night-soil men ('shitologists') dozed. He reproached them and then asked them to get up. He expected the disillusioned night-soil men to react against the unfair treatment they received from the Francophones. Instead, they dozed. Thus he felt psychologically defeated and claimed that his efforts in making them think and react were fruitless.

His efforts were not fruitless as he claimed. They wanted the Narrator to issue them with identity cards (identity cards were used in this context to symbolise citizenship), but he was not the one to give them identity cards. He was merely their

mouthpiece, hence he advised them to channel their complaints through the right procedure (to the Francophones):

First Give us professional identity cards sir. (They sing)

Narrator Don't complain to me, complain to *chef* Gaston (a Francophone) Make your complaints through the proper channel.

When the Narrator said the night-soil men should complain to *Chef* Gaston, the audience laughed because it already knew that the name Gaston was a typical Francophone name in Cameroon. The idea was that night-soil men should make their complaints to the Francophones.

The Francophones were aware of the fact that Anglophones were treated differently from themselves simply because the Anglophones inherited British culture. They also believed that the Francophones saved the Anglophones from the ferocious Ibos. Anglophones were appendage to Cameroon, and thus Anglophones should be satisfied with their position in Cameroon. From this perspective, Francophones did not issue identity cards to Anglophones:

Cripple Why have n't they got their professional identity cards, Mr Mayor?
Without one, they are not integrated, are they?

Blindman Anglos [short form of Anglophone] are traitors and slaves.
We saved them from the claws of the Ibos.

In a plebiscite that was conducted in February 1961, Southern Cameroons opted to join French Cameroon instead of Nigeria. The Francophones believed that the Anglophones made the wise decision, because if they had joined Nigeria, Anglophones would have perished during the Nigerian Civil war or during the frequent coups d'etat which have characterised Nigerian politics since it attained independence. From this point of view, Francophones strongly believed that they saved Anglophones from a bloody fate in Nigeria and from poverty.

Aadingingin refused to issue the identity cards, which literally meant granting citizenship. Instead, he threatened to murder the shitologists:

Otshama The night-soil men have sent a deputation to your Eminence!
They sincerely regret their past actions and now want their bygones to be bygones, [...] except this little matter of their identity papers.

Aadingingin I will break all the night-soil buckets over ..[night-soil men's] heads.

At this point, the audience which was made up of Francophones and Anglophones was dead silent. Tension was felt by all in the auditorium. The audience pitied the Anglophone plight in the country.

According to this performance, French-speaking Cameroonians did not consider Anglophones as Cameroonian citizens. The Anglophone plight is similar to the French-speaking Canadians in Canada wherein English-speaking Canadians refuse to recognise French-speaking Canadians as Canadians (Collins 1990: 103-140). Considering the experiences of English-speaking Cameroonians and French-speaking Canadians, it can be asserted that when two cultures co-exist, the culture which is preferred by the majority of the population becomes the dominant culture within the society, while the other becomes the subordinate. In Cameroon, the Anglophone community is the victim whereas in Canada, the French-speaking Canadians are the victims.

Aadingingin's refusal to issue the identity cards was final. The Narrator was desperate and asserted that Francophones accused Anglophones of being rebels. However, the Anglophone community was a rebellious one and it stood for justice. He added that Francophones did not want peace:

Narrator A violent man with a just cause. If you like, a rebel for a just cause. I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war...

He informed his co-workers that there was no future in the profession of shitology. He was implicitly informing the Anglophone community that they should emulate the Black Americans who were addressed as 'boys', 'niggers' and 'negros' by the whites. Today, they have proudly asserted that they are African Americans. This has given them a sense of pride and identity. This new identity is an asset for the American socio-economic, political and cultural activities. In a sense, the Narrator was requesting that the Anglophone community should refuse to continue in the profession of shitology. They should aspire for dignified professions.

He further asserted that no one would extract petrol in the creeks:

Narrator No one will touch my petrol in the creeks...

At this point when petrol was mentioned, the audiences laughed, hissed and jeered. Everyone in the audience was fully aware of the fact that Cameroon's oil refinery is located in Limbe, a region located in the Anglophone zone. Although the Anglophone community has been complaining, no Anglophone has had the courage to say it openly as Bate Besong did. Thus the audience was embarrassed but also excited. It was one of the hilarious moments in the play.

The exploitation of petroleum began in Cameroon on a commercial basis in 1978. The industry was the monopoly of the state-owned National Refinery Corporation (SONARA). Benjamine and Devarajan asserted that the Cameroon government official trade statistic report maintained that the earnings from crude oil exports in 1982 were 154. 8 billion Cameroon francs. This translated into an export volume of 1.87 million tons.(Benjamine and Devarajan in Schatzberg and Zartman 1986: 164 -188), and Ngoh maintained that SONARA's output was expected to reach ten million tons in 1985 (Ngoh 1988: 273-4). Furthermore, Benjamin and Devarajan stated that Cameroon Oil revenue was saved in banks in the USA (*ibid*).

Considering the fact that the state industry has a monopoly over the oil refinery, the revenue from the corporation goes into the national coffers. Many English-speaking Cameroonians hold the view that the natural resources in the Anglophone territory and Anglophone human resources are being exploited for the benefit of Francophones and their zone, while Anglophones politicians believe that top Francophone politicians have monopolised the oil revenue. For example, the Chairman of Cameroon Anglophone Movement asserted on the 1st October 1992 that:

The exploitation of oil in the state of west Cameroon (Southern Cameroon) started in 1966 and by 1972 crude oil was being sold on the high seas by oil companies with Ahidjo's knowledge, and revenue from these sales was never announced. As a matter of fact, Ahidjo did not announce the existence of oil in commercial quantities until several years after the so-called pacific revolution. To this day, oil revenue is the exclusive preserve of the presidency and is not subject to public audit. Thus Ahidjo had all the oil wealth of the state of West Cameroon put under his personal control making him the grand 'patron' he wanted to be who was to wield financial and political power (Epie 1992: 5).

Francophones also hold the opinion that the revenue from the sales of oil is monopolized by top politicians, particularly the President of Cameroon. For example, in an article entitled 'France Turns Down Biya's Request For 50 BN. Frs Loan. Wants Oil Money Pumped into Economy', it is written:

The French Government asked Biya to pump Cameroon's oil earnings - which until now remain a top secret - into the ailing economy. The French said Cameroon made substantial profits from the gulf war oil windfall. It is peddled in international oil circles that Cameroon's oil wealth is stashed in individual accounts in Swiss banks. The knowledge of this information makes France, the United States and other European countries hesitant to give Cameroon financial aid (Anon Cameroon Post, No 65, April 11 - 18 1991).

At this point, when the Narrator asserted that no one should touch his oil, the audience was divided into groups: the Anglophones said the Francophones were exploiting the Anglophones, whilst the disprivileged Francophones said the ruling class (both Anglophones and Francophones) was exploiting the disprivileged class. Consequently, although the playwright and the performers on stage were eager to portray the distinct political identities of the Anglophones and the Francophones, the audience defied these identities. It was more concerned with the identity of the disadvantaged class in both the Anglophone and the Francophone regions. This relegation of regional identity in preference to social identity keeps the Anglophone and Francophone together, and also create a sense of nationhood.

To return to the performance, the Narrator further asserted that the lake Nyos catastrophe (which has been mentioned in chapter four) was caused by nuclear explosion testing carried out by Jews:

Narrator I am prepared to love all humanity, except the stage manager, the ally of the Samaritan Jew-at- Nyos [Jews at lake Nyos]...A pity that such a mongrel breed should be allowed to burden the earth... Lack of human training.

This is an allusion to Bole Butake's play The Lake God which suggests that Lake Nyos disaster was caused by whites from Europe and USA carrying out scientific experiment in the region. Again Bate Besong held the same opinion, but also believed that the Jews collaborated with the Europeans and Americans. It is essential to draw

attention to the fact that diplomatic relations between Israel and Cameroon improved dramatically during Biya's administration compared to Ahidjo's era (Ngoh 1988: 334). Visits by Israelis coming to Cameroon increased.

Having made the claim that the Jews caused the Lake Nyos disaster, he then added that the rest of the Anglophones were not different from the Nyosians who perished during the Lake Nyos catastrophe:

Narrator You [shitologists] are one of the thousands from the villages around
 Nyos [the region occupied by the Nyos people] who had carelessly
 touched the sephardic ark.

The audience shouted and people talked at the top of their voices. Thus it was difficult to hear what the members of the audience said. However, after the performance, some of them agreed with the playwright. They maintained that the Anglophones were second class citizens in the country. Thus the Francophones would prefer to see the Anglophones exterminated or extinct like their brothers and sisters in the region of Nyos.

To return to the performance, this assertion reduced Anglophones to worthless people in the community. It was a statement that would galvanize even the most patient person to react. The shitologists agreed with the assertion and added that they were invisible servants in the society:

All We [Anglos] are invisible men.

First (his hands on his head)

 O me die-man, innocent Anglo.

 Monkey work gorilla chop?

Translation

 Oh dead invisible Anglophones.

 The monkey works for the benefit of the gorilla.

From this point of view, the Anglophones were like the Invisible Man whose main purpose for existing his oppressors thought was to use him for experiments.

The Narrator then went on to advise his co-workers (shitologists) to decide on whether to remain silent or to react against subjugation. The shitologists who had listened attentively to the advice, and who were already dispirited, left the stage singing a rebellious song:

Narrator My co-workers in the field of shitology don't have their independence
or freedom. It seems that you will soon decide to fight or run. A hero

Shitologists goes to war to die.
Mimimmi mimimimi, Oh mimi.
Talkam no fear. Oh mimimimi.
You fear you go die.
Oh mimimimi.
You no fear you go die.
Oh mimimi.

Translation

Speak and do not be scared.
Because whether you remain silent.
Or not. You will die.

The audience which was made up of Anglophones and Francophones joined the performers in chanting the song which was in Pidgin English. This created a hilarious atmosphere. The mere chanting of this song by Anglophones and Francophones in the auditorium suggested that Pidgin defied the political identities of Anglophones and Francophones and united Cameroonians irrespective of ethnic origin and class. Although the Narrator thought that this popular Pidgin song would enhance the Anglophone political identity, it enhanced instead the Cameroon political identity. The majority of the audience who were the ruled in the society asserted that the song requested the disprivileged class to get rid of its oppression. In this respect, the song did not only unite Anglophones and Francophones linguistically, it also united the oppressed in the auditorium.

Having made bitter assertions, the narrator turned to the audience and said:

Narrator Abi na lie [could be equated to my dear, is it a lie].

The audience responded in unison 'No ooooh' (no). The Narrator was intentionally asserting the Anglophone identity. The phrase 'abi na lie' is very popular among the Ibos. Since the Francophones believe that the Anglophones are Ibos [Biafrans] and they say it openly in government offices, in markets and in streets, this play is asserting

that the Anglophones are not ashamed of this association with the Ibos. In fact, the playwright, together with the performers, were mocking the Francophones.

Narrator went on to assert his Anglophone identity:

Narrator I have fought a good fight.
 I have finished my course.
 I have kept my anglo-faith.
 He that hath ears to hear.
 Let him hear.

As was obvious, the performers encouraged the audience to participate in the performance by asking the audience to join in the songs, asking rhetorical questions and directly asking the audiences to think.

Besides other major themes, the performance depicted the plight and the frustration of English-speaking Cameroonians in the light of the reunification between former English and French mandates. The performance portrayed the Anglophones as victims of the reunification. Anglophones do not have equal opportunities as their Francophone counterparts do. The Anglophones were condemned shitologists (people who carried excrement). The image of 'shitology', 'excrementologists' and 'nightsoil men' was the Anglophones' symbol of their socially disadvantaged position in the community. The playwright is not the first to make this assertion. Ndongko and Vivekananda assert that the Anglophone community is the victim (in all aspects of social, economic, political and culture life) in the light of the reunification between former British and French Cameroons (Ndongko and Vivekananda 1989).

The playwright is motivating the Anglophone community to assert its identity and also fight for its rights. If thirty years after the reunification between former British Cameroon and French Cameroon, the country has not attained any enviable identity which its future generations can emulate, Bate Besong is requesting that the Anglophone community should now create a credible identity for future generations to imitate. It is through this unique identity that true national consciousness can be awakened. In short, he is telling the Anglophones that the Francophones will not redeem the Anglophones because the Francophones seem to be benefiting from the situation in which they exploit Anglophones' human and natural resources.

However, although the Anglophones' problems are gradually becoming imperceptible, the Anglophones have built a mental picture of themselves as the socially disadvantaged group in the community. They identify themselves with the deprived and all sort of images that make life worthless. From this point of view, the Anglophone community is one among several which perceive community as a mental construction. Cohen clearly points out that:

Community exists in the minds of its members, and should not be confused with geographic or sociographic assertions of 'fact'. By extension, the distinctiveness of communities and, thus, the reality of their boundaries, similarly lies in the mind, in the meanings which people attach to them, not in their structural forms (Cohen 1985: 98).

Having asserted the Anglophone identity, the Narrator proceeded to depict the Francophone identity. He began by asserting that the Francophones were made up of the blind, the cripples and torturers. As observed earlier, Francophones were named after cripples and the blind (see picture number 21). The Narrator maintained that Francophones were blind people led by the blind:

Narrator Since the blind lead the blind, both shall fall in a ditch.

According to this performance, the Anglophone were the shitologists whilst the Francophones were physically disabled. These images represented a socially disadvantaged people and a demoralised group. Thus whilst the Anglophones were the disprivileged class in the society, the Francophones had lost human values, such as good morals and a sense of good judgement. The Narrator compensated the Anglophones (the socially disadvantaged class) with good morals - something which the Francophones lacked. In chapter one, the Megang group used irony in one of their songs entitled The chief sits on his throne to portray the contrast between the chief and the leader of the Megang group. The leader of the Megang group clung to moral values whilst the chief adhered to moral depravity. These performances suggested that the people were perfect, whilst their rulers were imperfect.

Shitologists turned to the audience and said:

All night - soil men *Chef* Otshama est mort!

The audience laughed and cheered. It was pleased when the performers spoke the French language. Perhaps Bate Besong and the performers on stage were informing the

Francophones in the auditorium that Anglophones were Cameroon citizens and should be given equal opportunities with their Francophone brothers. Furthermore, the performers were also informing the audience that to attain a Cameroonian identity, one of the basic requirements was to have a competent knowledge of English and French languages.

Bate Besong and the performers on stage used a mixture of languages, French, English and Pidgin. These languages are the most popular languages in Cameroon, and they unite Cameroonians. For example, Pidgin English is used as the only means of communication between educated and uneducated Cameroonians from diverse backgrounds. Also, French and English languages are spoken by educated Francophones and Anglophones. Whether Bate Besong and the performers intentionally used Pidgin English, English and French languages as a means of portraying identities or not, the languages united Francophones, Anglophones, the educated and semi-educated in the audience, thereby portrayed a true picture of the Cameroon linguistic identity.

During this performance, the performers maintained that the Francophones believed that their foreign friends would help them. This is not written in Beasts Of No Nation. Perhaps the director and performers borrowed this idea from Bate Besong's most recent play Requiem For The Last Kaiser. In this play Bate Besong goes beyond asserting the Anglophone and Cameroon identities to asserting developed countries' identity. According to him the inhabitants of developed countries are characterised by insincerity, manipulation and contempt. In this play, The Requiem For The Last Kaiser, the Swiss Banker advises His Majesty to hinder a national conference ². He adds that a national conference has never succeeded in a developing country:

Swiss Banker (With awe) A national conference has no place in emerging nations.

Tried leaders always avoid that leprosy.

Ambassador also asserts that the solidarity between national and foreign politicians could only be attained when the people are continuously suppressed:

Ambassador Our solidarity, with your government, involves our ability to refrain from pushing the enemies of Botha ³ to a point where they would want to take hold of powers that they are not yet matured to wield.

His Excellency assures the foreigners that he has power over the people:

Akhikrikirii I have them in the niches of my palm.

Bate Besong also accuses the anti-nationalist, Akhikrikirii (the leader of his fictitious country) who trusts and confides in his foreign friends. Also, the Ambassador and the Swiss Banker are dishonest. When they notice that His Majesty is ill, they make embarrassing statements and look down on him:

Swiss Banker He [referring to His Majesty Akhikrikirii] is certainly ill.

Ambassador The beast is ill.

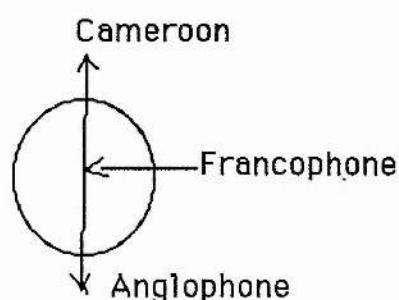
In Beasts Of No Nation, Bate Besong is primarily concerned with the Anglophone identity, and secondarily with the Cameroon identity. In The Requiem For The Last Kaiser, he calls on the government and the rulers of Cameroon to protect the Cameroon identity and interests against Western exploitation and manipulation. Thus Bate Besong starts perceiving the concept of identity beyond the Anglophone community at the national level. This is a view which protects the Cameroon community from a violent reaction because, as I have already pointed out, any secessionist gesture by the Anglophone community would eventually lead to a civil war because the Francophones want the country to remain intact. On the whole, Bate Besong deals with three conspicuous identities, namely, the Anglophone, the Cameroon and the West.

After the performance of Beasts of No Nation, some members of the audience said that the Anglophones were not the only shitologists, the majority of the Francophones were also shitologists. Some Francophones in the audience claimed that the play was about a conflict between the rich and the poor, the rulers and the ruled, the educated and the semi-educated, and not about the Anglophone identity.

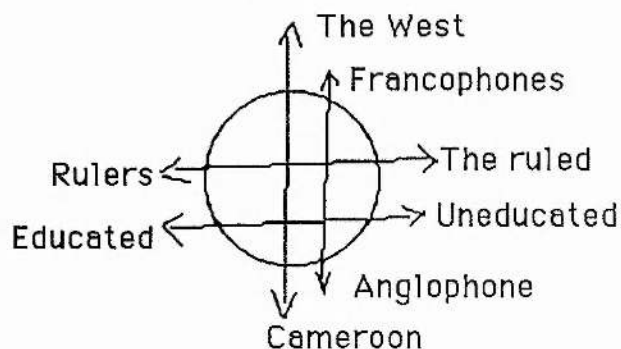
Members of the audience responded positively because they could interpret this play beyond the playwright's intended meaning. As a result, there were different groups of interest in the audience: the Anglophones who identified themselves with the shitologists, the disprivileged Francophones who thought that the play was about a conflict between the rich and the poor, the educated and uneducated, the rulers and the ruled. The rich Anglophones and Francophones who did not love the content of the play refused to listen to the remarks made after the performance. See illustration of the

identified groups pin-pointed by the playwright and the performers on stage on the one hand, and the audience on the other:

Fig 9 'a' Different identities perceived by the playwright, director, producer and performers.



'b' Different identities perceived by the audience



On the whole, the Anglophone national performances were concerned with three identities. For Better Or For Worse was solely concerned with the cultural and political identities of the Anglophones and the Anglophones' relationship with the Francophones and the West. The Magic Fruit and The inheritance were concerned with the Anglophone identity but also wanted the Anglophones and Francophones to compromise their differences and build a prosperous Cameroon. Beasts of No Nation and The Requiem For The Last Kaiser, were concerned with the Anglophone identity, the Cameroon identity, and Cameroon's relationship with the West.

The Anglophone community is aware of the fact that until the Anglophones are recognised by Francophones as Cameroonians, the Anglophones will not participate whole-heartedly in the country's activities and thus will not contribute in the country's development as well as protecting Cameroon's interest against Western exploitation and manipulation.

The performances and the responses of the audiences suggested that Pidgin English, a competent knowledge of English and French and the disprivileged class were major instruments which defied regional and social origins, united Francophones and Anglophones and also endowed Cameroon with a Cameroon cultural and political identity. Having endeavoured to create a Cameroon cultural and political identity,

Cameroon needed emblems and communal values to sustain a distinct cultural and political identity. These values are depicted in chapter six.

5. B. CULTURAL AND POLITICAL IDENTITIES IN FRANCOPHONE NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.

The performances discussed in this chapter were also examined in chapters three and four. This chapter examines the sections of the performances which deal with cultural and political identities of Cameroon as well as Cameroon's political relationship with developed countries. These performances include the productions by 'Les Perles Noires' (Abega's Le Sein t' est Pris) and by the Théâtre National (Abega's Sen Unique).

The main theme of Sens Unique is trade between two countries. As indicated in chapter three, the play is set in two fictitious worlds - Emo-Milang (the natural world) and Engunkang (the world of the ghosts). Emo-Milang and Engunkang have different views of the world. What brings the two worlds together is trade. In this play, Abega shows how international trade favours the west and disfavours developing countries.

Some dialogues which appeared in chapter three are reiterated in this chapter with the intention of making other points. As earlier indicated, the play began with the ghosts performing a dance of give and take in a forest near Emo-Milang. Mbutuku joined the dancers but surprised them when he danced with his right foot. The ghosts were surprised when Mbutuku danced with his right foot:

1er revenant Bas à celui qui danse à sa droite. Attention, un homme.

The fact that Mbutuku danced with his right foot while the ghosts danced with their left feet was a clear indication that the ghosts belonged to their own world and Mbutuku belonged to another world. The ghosts did not want Mbutuku to take part in their dance. In this respect, the ghosts were protecting their own interests. Mbutuku insisted on participating in the dance, so the ghosts impelled him to disclose his identity and to give reasons for disrupting their dance. Mbutuku revealed his identity and added that his mission was to participate in *la fête du donner et du recevoir* (trade). The dancers warned that membership was restricted to the ghosts, and advised Mbutuku to return to his own land. Mbutuku refused to heed their advice. Rather, he insisted on participating in the festival. He also drew the ghosts' attention to the precious items

(cocoa, coffee, groundnuts, gold and diamonds) he had brought with him to exchange with Engunkang's goods. As shown in chapter three, the ghosts received Mbutuku's produce but inflicted him with a lame leg.

At this point, when the ghosts inflicted Mbutuku with a lame leg in exchange for his trade goods, some French members of the audience left the hall. Cameroonians who were present said people should not run away from reality. This response from the audience indicated that some members of the audience grasped the underlying message of the play. This implied that the audience identified themselves with specific countries. Whereas Cameroonians identified themselves with Emo-Milang, the French people identified themselves with Engunkang. Mbutuku also realised that the relationship between Engunkang and Emo-Milang was based on dishonesty.

In act two, Okokon (one of the ghosts, and a supposed friend of Mbutuku) met Mbutuku and his three wives. Okokon took the wives to a place which he said was peaceful, splendid and had abundant food. Mbutuku was determined to retrieve his wives, so he followed Okokon and his wives to the invisible world.

Mbutuku followed the ghosts with the intention of persuading his wives to return to Emo-Milang. He maintained that although Emo-Milang depended on Engunkang's technical assistance, he would not be cajoled by the ghosts' kind words:

Mbutuku Je ne veux plus de ses grands discours sur la nécessaire co-opération
qui doit exister entre Engunkang et Emo-Milang, sur l'assistance des
technique que le revenants, à cause de leur grande connaissance des
mystères qui ne nous sont pas encore révélés, peuvent nous
apporter...Je n'en veux plus. Je veux mes femmes, et je ne rentrerai pas
sans elles...

This reference to technical assistance suggested that *la fête du donner et du recevoir* was not simply a story about trade between Mbutuku and the ghosts, but stood for the relationship between developed and developing countries. Hence the suspense, ambiguity and obscurity that had been sustained in the previous acts were illuminated. The playwright uses symbols to represent developing and developed countries - Mbutuku is a symbol of the developing world which depends on the west for technical assistance, whilst the ghosts represent the developed world. Given the

unequal terms of trade between Emo-Milang and Engunkang that fostered the underdevelopment of Emo-Milang, Mbutuku must have realised that technical assistance was provided to enable Emo-Milang to produce agricultural produce at low cost for the benefit of Engunkang. Thus the influence of the donor (Engunkang) was detrimental to the recipient (Emo-Milang). Ndongko pointed out that 80% of Western technical assistance was spent (in the form of high salaries, good housing facilities and other privileges) on European experts who claimed to teach African technicians. Therefore western aid did not serve its purpose since it did not benefit the people of developing countries (Ndongko et al 1988). Considering that aid was unproductive and that the terms of trade were unfavourable, Emo-Milang was the loser. Perhaps Emo-Milang should reduce its desire for foreign goods and concentrate on the production of local tools and food crops as Weka the protagonist of the play entitled For Better Or For Worse suggested.

Mbutuku met the First Ghost who enquired whether the former had come to participate in the *fête du donner et du recevoir*; and, if so, the ghosts were pleased. But Mbutuku said Okokon seized his wives, thus his mission was to plead with the ghosts to act as a panel of judges between him (the prosecutor) and Okokon (the accused):

1er revenant Tu es revenu prendre part à la fête, n'est-ce pas?...Si tu as quelque chose à donner, nous le recevrons avec joie.

Mbutuku Non! Je dois voir Okokon . Il a enlevé mes épouses...

Mbutuku also accused the ghosts (who agreed to act as judges to his case) of causing poverty in Emo-Milang. The ghosts were aware of the unequal terms of trade, and also understood that Emo-Milang's produce represented the people's labour. Nevertheless, the First Ghost opposed Mbutuku's claim that Engunkang was solely responsible for the poverty in Emo-Milang, and he asserted that it was Emo-Milang's turn to profit from the trade. He advised Emo-Milang to look for solutions to its problems:

Mbutuku J'ai pourtant très bien compris que c'est toi qui organisais les tiens pour dépouiller les pauvres imbeciles d' Emo-Milang qui s' aventuraient ici.

1er revenant Oui, le café comme symbole du labour du paysan de chez toi, et l'or comme représentant la pureté. Ce n'est pas du tout ce que j'ai dit. J'ai plutôt voulu t'expliquer qu'il faudrait essayer à ton tour de profiter de l'occasion pour tenter de te débarrasser de ton infirmité toi aussi.

By pointing out that Emo-Milang should look for a solution to its problem, perhaps the ghosts wanted Emo-Milang to exchange its produce for capital goods which would enable Emo-Milang to develop. In this respect, the playwright is mocking developing countries who prefer to exchange their agricultural produce for western luxurious goods instead of capital goods. If developing countries exchange their agricultural produce for capital investment goods, they can use these capital goods to create industries in their respective countries. These industries might manufacture some of the goods developing countries import from developed countries.

Perhaps the playwright is suggesting that since land and labour are comparatively cheaper in developing countries (such as Cameroon) than in developed countries, local manufactured goods (in developing countries) will be cheaper than and preferable to expensive imported manufactured goods from the West. Moreover, since local industries will use much of the country's agricultural produce (such as rubber to manufacture shoes), the quantity of agricultural produce will be reduced in the international market, and this might lead to an increase in its price. The terms of trade between developed countries and developing countries might thus become equal. Lastly, developing countries will have an advantage over the west since, besides becoming industrialised, they will also have a potential agricultural sector which will supply local industries with raw materials. Perhaps the playwright is informing developing countries that they have resources which, if properly used, will transform their countries into developed nations. But because their desire for imported manufactured luxurious goods of the West is bottomless, developing countries will sink further into the abyss of underdevelopment.

Viewed from this perspective, the playwright is using a subtle style to deliver his message. In doing so, he avoids being considered by the government as subversive. The local trade between Emo-Milang and Engunkang stands for the macrocosmic global trade between developing and developed countries. On the one

hand, then, the playwright attempts to protect himself from government scrutiny by using such symbolic choices. Yet, on the other hand, he hopes that Cameroon being a developing country will digest the message of the play and that its politicians will protect Cameroon national identity and interests.

Having inflicted Mbutuku with a lame leg, a hump (see picture number 24), and having taken all his produce (diamonds, gold, cocoa, coffee, and groundnuts) the ghosts insisted that disabled people should not be allowed to participate in *the fête du donner et du recevoir*:

Le boiteux Chasse cet homme. Ne le laissez pas se mêler au cercle des danseurs.

Nous n'admettons pas les éclopés ici.

It was noted in chapter three that at this juncture when the ghosts refused Mbutuku from participating in their dance (after they had stripped away all his precious goods), the relationship between Mbutuku and the ghosts was similar to that of birds and the fig tree. Birds abandon a fig tree after they have stripped it of its riches.

Mbutuku returned to Emo-Milang and narrated the events which led to his infirmity and how he lost his wives, but his father in-laws did not believe a word of his story, and insisted on accompanying him to the land of Engunkang. Once again, Mbutuku warned that the ghosts were dangerous.

In spite of the warnings Nki and Meboua (Mbutuku's fathers in-law) insisted that Mbutuku should take them to Engunkang. Mbutuku, Nki and Meboua visited the ghosts, and Nki and Meboua were given a hearty welcome by the ghosts. This pleased them and they immediately trusted the ghosts despite Mbutuku's warnings:

Nki Tu es un vrai homme!

Meboua Comme je t'envie! ...

Mbutuku Ils ont réussi à te voler tes deux jambes.

Nki Tais-toi, pauvre jaloux!

The playwright suggests that the ghosts will continuously exploit the people of Emo-Milang since the latter do not take the trouble to analyse the ghosts' intentions. Secondly, the distrust that prevailed among the people of Emo-Milang created an opportunity for the ghosts to exploit the country further. The playwright is implicitly suggesting that developed countries will continue to exploit developing countries.

Nevertheless, in spite of the playwright's observation, a developing country with a reasonable amount of natural resources, a dynamic population, a pro-nationalist leader, political stability and social contentment can create an economic miracle, and improve on the people's life-style.

The initial harmonious meeting (between the people of Emo-Milang and the ghosts) took a tragic turn at the end of the performance. Nki wanted the most recent luxurious car in Engunkang. However, instead of giving him the vehicle, he was made lame and Meboua was made blind. Nki wanted his legs and Meboua his sight, but one of the ghosts reminded them about the terms of trade - give and take. Okokon also advised Mbutuku, Nki and Meboua to retire to Emo-Milang since it was almost dawn and the ghosts must return to Engunkang:

Meboua Je...je ...tout est noir, je ne vois plus rien !

Nki Je... je ne peux pas.. Mes jambes ne m'obéissent plus !

Meboua Je veux mes yeux.

Nki Je veux mes jambes.

Un danseur Chers beaux-parents, vous étiez au rendez-vous du donner et du recevoir. (Il s'en va).

Un deuxième Vous avez donné ... (Il s'en va)

Un musicien Et vous avez reçu ... (Il s'en va)

Okokon Je suis obligé de vous quitter. Il fera bientôt jour, et ici, on se couche au chant du coq.

At this stage of the play, some members of the audience associated the actions of Mbutuku, Nki and Meboua with those of leaders of developing countries, and the actions of ghosts with those of politicians and businessmen in developed countries. They sighed and shook their heads.

Nki was seized with uncontrollable rage, and thus asked for his spear to fight the ghosts:

Nki Tu insultes Meboua mon porte parole devant moi? C'en est trop! Ma patience est à bout. Mes sagaies, où sont mes sagaies?

The audience jeered. The audience knew just too well that spears could not be used to fight ghosts.

Nki thought he could use his spears to fight the ghosts. Spears are inferior weapons. Above all, ghosts have no flesh. They have the power to be visible or invisible. Nki's desire to fight the ghosts is similar to a child trying to cross his shadow or a scientist trying to prevent the wind from blowing, or village women using bowls to reclaim land covered with a sea. By making the ghosts represent the people of developed countries, the playwright implicitly asserts that the West has enormous power and influence over developing countries. Since, the ghosts will definitely defeat the people of Emo-Milang in a battle, the people of Emo-Milang should protect Emo-Milang's interests instead of thinking of fighting the ghosts. The playwright is mocking developing countries and advising them to face realities and stop living in a dream world.

From the message of the performance, it was deduced that the lack of trust among the people of developing countries was another factor which was creating poverty and under-development in the developing countries. Thus the people must trust others, identify with their country and thus protect its interest.

The leader of the ghosts, who was disgusted with the actions of Nki and Meboua, enquired from Mbutuku why he brought the men to participate in the *fête du donner et du recevoir*. He also wanted to know whether the people of Emo-Milang expected equal terms of trade between the two countries:

1er revenant Monsieur Mbutuku, pourquoi apporter une note discordante, alors que nous sommes en train d'établir ici de nouvelles relations entre Engunkang et Emo-Milang, basées sur de fructueux échanges commerciaux et de technologie, sur le respect mutuel et l'égalité des partenaires ?

First ghost demonstrated the rhetoric of Western politicians. By doing so, he concretised the audience belief that the ghosts were the inhabitants of the West.

The audience was silent. The only sound heard was sighs. As was clear, the ghosts have identified themselves with their world, and thus their priority was to protect the interests of Engunkang. They achieved their ambition by exploiting the natural and human resources in Emo-Milang and used these resources to develop their world. In this respect, the trade between the two countries could not be equal. The First

Ghost's declaration summarised the nature of trade between the two countries. While Engunkang was growing richer, Emo-Milang grew poorer, because the terms of trade were based on an unequal foundation.

The playwright portrays the ghosts as beings who possess various unsavoury characteristics; they are cruel, treacherous and dishonest. In the playwright's view, the ghosts are villainous characters. Furthermore, the playwright is informing developing countries that the possibility of securing equal terms of trade with developed countries is an illusion. Therefore developing countries should search for other alternatives for the purpose of safeguarding their interests.

One of the main messages of this performance was to urge Cameroonians to protect the Cameroon identity and thus to give priority to Cameroonian interests. This identification will prevent foreigners from exploiting the country. As mentioned in chapter three the audience was divided. For example, the Minister of Information and Culture who represented the government in the auditorium maintained that if the terms of trade were as they were portrayed in the performance, then Cameroon should stop trading with the West. He also added that if Mbutuku was as foolish as the performance suggested, then, Mbutuku should reconsider and do so immediately.

This performance which described how Emo-Milang exchanged its cash crops, diamonds and gold was performed at the time the government had not paid farmers for their cash crops. Furthermore, the audience was also aware of the problems farmers faced. The plot of the play was centred around a well known problem in the country. Hence, the different factions of the audience responded in different ways. For example, some members of the audience said how could a country which depended on its income through the sales of its agricultural and natural resources progress when its trading partners were insincere. Others said Mbutuku exaggerated the natural wealth in his country and thus attracted foreign exploitation.

Some information about Abega's Le Sein t' est Pris, has been provided in chapter four. Besides other themes in this play, it also depicts the lack of the spirit of nationalism among Cameroonians.

The second episode of the play portrayed Koum's determination to remain in the city despite the problems he faced in the city, and his wife's advice that the family should return to the village:

Koum Chaque fois que j'ai le dos tourné, allez hop, tu fais ta valise, tu habiles l'enfant pour le grand départ, dis-tu! Tu veux retourner à la terre. La belle idée! C'est bien, de retourner à la terre. C'est sain, c'est poétique, c'est bucolique, mais il n'y a pas que cela! Le monde est devenu moderne. Il faut s'habiller autrement, manger sûrement, vivre autrement! Le siècle nous interpelle. Le développement, le progrès, toutes ces choses....

Some members of the audience were emotionally and intellectually moved. This was discernible in their facial expressions. Perhaps, they like Koum were wondering whether people could escape from modernity. It was a moment of retrospection, and the audience was as quiet as a lake.

Koum found a solution to his financial problems by selling some of the wife's breast milk to a rich mother who did not want to breast-feed her baby. In order to ensure that the wife did not breast-feed the baby in his absence, he fitted containers on to the wife's breasts' and used a twine rope to tether the wife. In this way he had total control over the wife's breast milk:

Koum J'ai donc préféré me procurer le moyen de contrôler la production du lait de ton sien...Désormais, voici quelles seront les règles à observer ici: je téterai quand je serai rassasié, l'enfant me succédera. Enfin, tu auras pour toi toute seule ce qui restera...

Although Koum said the wife and child could also have some of the milk, he drank 99% of the milk and left 1% to the wife and child.

At this stage some members of the audience said the wife's breast milk provided the husband with his needs, while, she and her baby were deprived (by the husband) from profiting from the milk. Therefore, the underlying message of the play was that, although Cameroon was considerably rich, many Cameroonians did not benefit from these riches.

Nam (the wife) became very hungry, and even lacked the energy to respond to Koum's questions:

Nam ..Et, disent les anglais, 'a hungry man, an angry man.' Un homme affamé, un homme fâché.

The audience was pleased when Nam spoke English. It was not just the fact that she spoke English, but the manner in which she endeavoured to utter the words. The audience (which was made up of Francophones and Anglophones) clapped hands. In chapter two, the performers in the Nursery School's play in Mundemba ended their performance with a bilingual song. This song was performed in Pidgin English and French. In *École Premier Populaire de Mfou*, one of the actresses performed a recitation in a mixture of French and English. In *Beast of No Nation*, the shitologist communicated a few sentences in French. In this performance, the audience was also pleased when Nam spoke English. This indicates that Anglophones and Francophones are all endeavouring to have a competent knowledge in both English and French. The audience which represented the Cameroon population hinted that Anglophones and Francophones were aware of the fact that every Cameroonian must understand English and French. Bilingualism means the beginning of the creation of a Cameroon national language.

Later Koum realised that the wife's breast milk had dried up. He rushed to the shop and purchased bread. He had the same intention as the officer in Butake's *The Survivors*. The officer wanted the survivors to live so that he could ensure the inflow of aid and to enjoy the services of the woman Mboysi.

Koum returned to his flat, untethered his wife and threw the bread on the floor for her. After Nam has eaten, she went to the room and found her baby dead. The baby was her only hope. The child's death was a great loss to the wife since the baby was the only thing which brought her happiness. Its death symbolised a developing country's (particularly Cameroon) loss of hope and aspiration, and signified a bleak future.

Others in the audience said the family lived in extreme poverty. Nevertheless, the husband exploited the family's only resource (the wife's breast milk) for the benefit of himself and the West. His actions indicated that in spite of the poverty in many parts of Cameroon, some Cameroonians still exploited the country's natural resources for the benefit of themselves and the West.

The performance ended with Koum informing Nam that his aeroplane would leave in a couple of minutes and bidding her good luck:

Koum ...mon avion part dans quelques minutes. Bonne chance....(See picture number 28).

The fact that the husband saved to purchase an expensive suit made in France and air tickets showed that he was not only cruel and callous towards his family, he was also an anti-nationalist who did not purchase fabric from the local CICAM (an industry which manufactures local cloth). He would have used part of the money to purchase cheap local fabric from CICAM for his family and give part (of the money) to his wife to start a small business which would yield income for the family. Instead, he preferred to purchase a suit made in France. The significance of this suit lies in the fact that many Cameroonians hold the view that France, particularly Paris, is the centre for fashion. Therefore any one who purchased a dress, a suit or a pair of shoes from France should be respected. In Cameroon, many Francophones would prefer to use three quarters of their monthly income to purchase outfits from France, even if they have to live in tiny accommodation and be poorly fed. Therefore, the husband was merely conforming to the Francophone's life-style. By contrast, Anglophones do not have a burning desire for British goods, because they do not consider themselves British.

A major point is deduced from Koum's actions. He preferred products of western civilization over home produced goods. In this sense Koum is a representative of the class of assimilated elite Cameroonians who consider themselves Frenchmen and thus protect the interests of France. Koum is also a symbol of Europe in the sense that he exploits his wife breast milk for his benefit, and the West. If he had spent the money on home fabric, he would have been among those who were promoting development of the textile industry (CICAM). By using the revenue from the sales of his wife's breast milk to purchase an expensive suit made in France, Koum is promoting development in Europe rather than in Cameroon. Thus his actions show that the unemployed are very instrumental in creating unemployment in the country, since they prefer western manufactured goods to local manufactured goods. Unless the Cameroonians change

their negative attitude towards local goods, unemployment would continue to rise and the country will continue towards underdevelopment.

The fact that Koum used the revenue from the sales of the wife's breast milk to purchase an expensive French suit showed how Africa was 'milked' for the benefit of developed countries and the privileged class in Africa. 'Milked' in the sense in which it is used refers to exploitation not just in the domestic sphere but within the world system. Thus the title of the play, Le Sein t' est Pris [sic] (The breast is taken) corresponds with the message of the play. Africa is weeping because the West has taken its natural and human resources. But as it was noted in the performance, neither of the beneficiaries (the rich mother and the husband) listened to the cry of the wife. This portrays how the West and the privileged class in Africa do not listen to the cry of developing countries. By contrast, the wife whose breast milk was exploited by the husband and who preferred the family to return to the village was a representative of Africa.

As was obvious from the discussion, Francophone national performances were primarily concerned with the political identity of Cameroon. Abega, the Francophone national theatre practitioner who is spearheading this campaign, uses international trade as a mirror through which developing countries such as Cameroon can understand the tremendous negative effects of unequal trade between developed and developing countries. This realisation might induce Cameroonians to protect the Cameroonian identity and thus give priority to the country's interest.

5. C. CONCLUSION.

Anglophone national theatre was first concerned with the Anglophone identity and an attempt to unravel the Anglophone plight. Only second, did it deal with the Cameroon identity. In contrast, Francophone national theatre practitioners took little notice of regional or ethnical problems. Rather, the performances were primarily concerned with the global Cameroon identity and Cameroon's relationship with the West. Anglophone national performances gave the audience the impression that Anglophone cultural and political identities plus Francophone cultural and political identities were equated with the Cameroon cultural and political identities. Thus, Anglophone cultural and political identities + Francophone cultural and political identities = Cameroon cultural and political identities.

By contrast, Francophone national performances gave the impression that Anglophone was an appendage of the Francophone. Therefore the Francophone cultural and political identities were synonymous with the Cameroon cultural and political identities. Hence, Francophone cultural and political identities = Cameroon cultural and political identities. These contrasting views in the performances are illustrated below.

Anglophone national performances, such as Bate Besong Beasts of no Nation depicted Anglophones' view of the world, style of dressing and occupations as means of portraying the cultural identity of Anglophones. The Anglophone national performances maintained that Francophones discriminated against them. Ngome's For Better Or For Worse was concerned about discrimination and called for the Anglophone region to secede. In Eyoh's The Magic Fruit, the younger brother asserted that he was treated differently from his elder brother because they were half-brothers, and in the The inheritance, the character Ma Menge maintained that his two sons could not be treated equally because they were half-brothers. Although the surface message dwelt on half-siblings relationships, the underlying message was that Anglophones and Francophones were treated differently because they had inherited different colonial cultures (British and French). This theme was carried forward by Bate Besong who

emphatically asserted in his Beast of No Nation that Anglophones were the condemned 'shitologists' whilst Francophones were the privileged class, simply because of their different colonial cultural heritage. Beast of No Nation showed that Francophones were people of various deformities; they were blind and lame. This was a symbol of inefficient leaders.

Another major issue raised in the Anglophone national performances was that the Francophones exploited the Anglophones' natural and human resources. Bate Besong also maintains that the Francophones exploit oil in the Anglophone zone for their own benefit whilst the Anglophones are the servants of the society. Thus he demands Francophones to stop exploiting the Anglophone region, and Epie Ngome carries forward this theme by asserting that Francophones spend the revenue from the plantations located in the Anglophone zone without the Anglophones' consent. Moreover, Francophones are solely interested in exploiting and not in developing the region. The Anglophone national theatre practitioners want part of the revenue from the sales of Cameroon oil (which is appropriated from the Anglophone region) to be re-invested into the Anglophone zone, and that part of Cameroon Development Corporation's (CDC) and PAMOL's profit should also be re-invested in the regions in which they are located. The Anglophone national performances portrayed Anglophone dissatisfaction, grievances and their accusation against the Francophones. This implies that Anglophone national theatre practitioners do not agree with the assertion made by Anglophones' first politicians during the reunification. 'How nice it is to meet our Brothers' [Francophones] (Ngoh 1990: 170-217).

However, in spite of Anglophones' complaints, certain factors have to be taken into account. First, the differences of opinion that prevailed among Anglophone politicians of the 1950s and 1960s led the thirteenth session of UN General Assembly to decide that a plebiscite would finally settle the Anglophone issue. Second, the Anglophone region attained independence through reunification with French Cameroon which had already been granted independence in 1960. Perhaps if the Anglophone politicians were united and had a common political purpose, Southern Cameroon (Anglophone zone) would have attained independence as an autonomous entity. Furthermore, the attainment of independence through reunification with independent

French Cameroon, led Francophones to consider Anglophones a subordinate group. Following these factors, the first Anglophone politicians were partially responsible for the present Anglophone plight.

However, despite the fact that Anglophone national theatre practitioners are primarily concerned with Anglophone identity and their plight, as opposed to that of the Francophone sector, they also worry about the Cameroon national identity. Thus both Anglophone national performances and Francophone national theatre were concerned with strengthening the overall Cameroon national identity. Hence Bate Besong stops attacking the Francophones to describe the insincerity of the people in the West. In his The Requiem Of The Last Kaiser, he attacks the Swiss Banker and the foreign Ambassadors. Abega's characters in his Sens Unique, are ghosts (representatives of the people of developed countries) of various deformities: blind, hunchback, lame and so on. These disabilities symbolise moral depravity.

The Anglophone national theatre practitioners' decision to protect the Cameroon identity implies they have realised that the real problem for the Anglophones does not lie in the tension and the dichotomy between the Anglophones and the Francophones, but in creating a national identity that subsumes both. This presupposes that when Southern Cameroonians opted to unite with Francophones, it intended to remain united. This fact is discernible in the sense that at no time in the history of Cameroon has the Anglophone region attempted to secede. In fact after years of colonial separation between Britain and France, the two Cameroons opted to reunite. The question is not one of unity but one of merging the two legacies of Britain and France. The problem arises from the weak foundations of national institutions. Nash pointed out that different people with different backgrounds and culture could live side by side (Nash, 1989).

The messages of these national performances showed that the Anglophones set aside the Anglophone plight when it came to protecting the Cameroon identity. We noted in chapters one and two that the Bima local performing artists ignored the antagonism among villages and depicted the problems of the Bima as a whole, and that the groups in Mundemba protected their respective interests, but other groups such as the GHS Students' Troupe used theatre to articulate the problems in Mundemba, such

as the absence of a good road. In this chapter, the performances showed that the Anglophone national practitioners did not only depict the Anglophone plight, they also articulated the hindrances of the overall Cameroon identity. This implies that what Cameroonians want is a strong political leader whose main concern will be to protect the interest of all Cameroonians, be they Anglophones or Francophones, rich or poor, women or men, the young or the old. This shows that theatre has the power of uniting people with different social and regional backgrounds who share a common destiny.

The use of Pidgin English in a national performance united an audience which was often made up of Anglophones and Francophones. Thus Pidgin English is not confined by the political boundary between Anglophone and Francophone. It encouraged and strengthened the Cameroon identity. The use of the English language as the main language of communication in Anglophone national performances was one of the means of depicting the political identity of the Anglophones. The French language, like the English language, was also used as one of the means of describing the political identity of Francophones. Nevertheless, like the territorial languages which strengthened the sense of nationhood amongst the people in a given territorial region in Europe (Anderson 1990), the use of French and English languages in national performances also united Anglophones and Francophones and also strengthened the political identity of Cameroon.

The lower class who watched these performances also defied ethnic, regional and class boundaries. They were more concerned with the Cameroon cultural and political identities. For example, they disapproved of rulers who saved Cameroon's oil money abroad.

On the whole, the use of a mixture of languages in national performances and the audiences' responses to the performances were means through which Cameroon political and cultural identities were encouraged and strengthened. Nevertheless, besides languages and the audiences' responses, Cameroon national performances were also concerned with national values which could strengthen and sustain the overall (cultural and political) identity of Cameroon. The performances discussed in the subsequent chapter describe those national values which every Cameroonian should

strive to practice for the purpose of creating an overall identity of Cameroon which would guarantee the progress of Cameroon.

¹ Southern Cameroon wanted a third alternative, an option to remain an autonomous state. But Britain was not ready to provide economic assistance. Also, Southern Cameroon politicians had contrasting opinions instead of compromising their different opinions. These factors forced the UNO to persuade Southern Cameroon to join French Cameroon or Nigeria.

² The most recent political issue in Cameroon was about the introduction of a national conference. The opposition parties wanted a national conference for the purpose of accountability but the government was reluctant. The President is a disciple of President Nyerere who asserted that African society is traditionally classless and, therefore, competitive political parties are redundant.

³ This reference to Botha was connotative. Botha was an enemy to Black South Africans. Perhaps the playwright is suggesting that in Cameroon, the ruled are the enemies of the rulers. Many Cameroonians were aware of the apartheid system and Botha in South Africa. Thus the mere mention of Botha invoked appalling images.

CHAPTER SIX

MORALITY, ETHICS AND SENTIMENTS IN NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.

This chapter describes and analyses Anglophone and Francophone national performances that call on Cameroonians to strive for morality and ethics which would characterise the cultural and political identities of Cameroon. The performances also entreat Cameroonians to invest in Cameroon. The plays primarily discussed in earlier chapters also engaged in questions of morality and ethics. The Anglophone performances include Musinger's Njema, Eyoh's The Magic Fruit, Butake's The Survivors and Bate Besong's Beasts Of No Nation whilst the Francophone national performances include Oyono Mbia's Le Bourbier and Mbala's Bengoula au Cabinet du Ministre.

6. A. MORALITY, ETHICS AND NATIONAL SENTIMENTS IN ANGLOPHONE NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.

Musinger's Njema and Bate Besong's Beasts Of No Nation as well as Eyoh's The Magic Fruit and Butake's The Survivors all portray the negative consequences of abortion, avarice, gluttony, selfishness, an abhorrent attitude held by Francophones towards the Anglophone culture, the appointment of inefficient people into responsible positions and so on. All these shortcomings distort the overall Cameroon identity and retard the progress of a developing country such as Cameroon.

Musinger's Njema is a didactic play. The plot of Njema centres around an unfaithful pregnant teenage student named Njema. She has several lovers, one named Akar and others who are merely referred to as boyfriends. Njema realises she is pregnant but she does not know exactly who is responsible for her pregnancy. She tells Akar, but Akar says he is not responsible for her pregnancy. Njema is disappointed, nevertheless, her girlfriend Eposi advises her to discuss the issue with all her lovers.

She maintains that one of them might accept the responsibility of being the father of her child. Nina (Njema's girlfriend) advises Njema to have an abortion. Njema accepts the idea of discussing her pregnancy with all her lovers, but maintains that if none of them accepts the responsibility, she would have an abortion. Eventually none of them does accept the responsibility, and because Njema knows that the educational authority in the Anglophone zone prevents pregnant girls from pursuing further education, she performs an abortion. In the process of having the abortion, she dies. Her parents want to know the cause of her death, so they consult a soothsayer who reveals the cause of Njema's death. The play ends with her friends and parents weeping over her corpse. Njema is a one act play divided into many scenes.

Musinger's Njema was performed by GHS Experimental Theatre Troupe Mundemba under the directorship of Kome (a tutor in GHS Mundemba) in December 1990. I was the production consultant.

The play began with a young teenage girl who was attending a mission secondary school. The girl had a series of boyfriends, and because of this, she suddenly became very recalcitrant. She no longer listened to her mother's advice and met her boyfriends at her own convenience. However, she always left the house under the pretext of going to study with her classmates. It reached the point when her mother noticed that she was pregnant, and drew her attention to the fact. Nevertheless, Njema ignored the mother's remark.

The second scene began when Njema had joined her boyfriend under a palm tree. Njema wanted to know whether the boy really loved her. To her great satisfaction, the boyfriend declared that he did and that their love would remain constant. The response pleased her, so she announced her pregnancy. Unfortunately, although the boy loved her, he was not ready to become a father. He maintained that he was not the father of her baby and advised her to discuss the issue with her other lovers. Scene three opened with Njema and her friends - Nina and Eposi, both of whom were her class mates. Eposi and Nina wondered why Njema had been absent from school for a couple of weeks, so they decided to call at her parent's residence. However, as they were walking, Nina saw something under a tree. They walked towards it and realised that it was Njema. They were surprised to find her alone under the palm tree since it

was very unusual to see her without Akar (Njema's boyfriend). Njema revealed her³⁵⁷ problem to her friends. Nina advised Njema to have a simple abortion whilst Eposi did not agree. She advised Njema to give birth to the child because the child might become the President of the country or a state minister. Eposi concluded that since Njema had so many admirers and lovers, she should tell all of them about the pregnancy, and then perhaps one of them would accept the responsibility. Njema who had been listening silently concluded that she would carry out Eposi's advice, and then, if it failed, she would resort to abortion as Nina had advised. Eposi was portrayed as a good person whilst Nina was shown to be machiavellian. They were similar to the characters of virtues and vices in Malowe's Doctor Faustus.

In scene four, Njema met one of her boyfriends in his room and while they were chatting together, Akar knocked on the door. The boyfriend met Akar at the door and declared that he was busy. However, Akar remained at the door and listened to the conversation in the room. Njema told the boyfriend that Akar wanted her as a girlfriend but she refused. The second boyfriend was pleased to hear that Njema has turned down Akar. Encouraged with this new knowledge, he declared that Njema was a good girl and that he loved her. He slandered Akar's character by asserting that Akar was a vagrant, a numbskull, and a philanderer. However, when Njema revealed that she was pregnant, he advised Njema to discuss the issue with the person responsible for her pregnancy. Having failed to convince the second boyfriend that he was her sole lover, and thus responsible for her pregnancy, Njema declared that she would resort to abortion, and, should she live or die, it would be an appalling or desirable experience; Njema was one of the people who strongly believed that there was life after death. Thus even if she died, she would still remember the experiences of an abortion.

The fifth scene opened when Njema had already taken the abortion drug. She was lying helplessly on the bed and crying. Nina came in and enquired whether she had taken the medicine. Later Eposi came in just when Njema was giving up the ghost. However, even though Njema was struggling with death she advised her friends (Eposi and Nina) that they should not believe in what men say, because she did not want them to undergo a similar experience.

The subsequent scene portrayed her parents' lamentation. This was then followed by a scene where the parents consulted a traditional doctor who succeeded in invoking Njema's spirit. The spirit revealed the cause of her death but failed to reveal the name of the friend who advised her to take the abortion drug. The performance ended with her friends, relatives and some of her boyfriends weeping over the corpse.

Njema is a realistic play in the sense that it depicts true events in the Cameroon community. This explains why the play appeals to men, women, the old and the young in the community and many people want the play to be perpetually staged.

After the performance of Njema, the audience posed a series of rhetorical and simple questions among themselves. Some wanted to know the factors that compelled a girl to have several boyfriends. Was it for economic reasons? If that was the case, it did not apply to Njema. Did a girl keep several boyfriends because she was still searching for a true lover? The audience did not arrive at a definite conclusion. Moreover, many parents wanted their female children to watch the play. They were convinced that the fictitious death of Njema might dissuade other girls from contemplating abortion or having many affairs. Their desire was hopelessly shattered when a week after the performance of Njema, the GHS's principal's daughter died in the course of having an abortion. The sympathisers who went to pay their last respects to the corpse blamed the deceased for performing an abortion after having watched the play. Furthermore, the playwright revealed during our interview that he spent two days writing the play in the hope that his girlfriend who had recently become pregnant and who was contemplating an abortion would be too frightened to carry it out. He said that the play was staged five times within two weeks in the hope that the girl would keep the pregnancy; but she ignored this advice and the potential hazards as portrayed in the play and got rid of the baby.

From this perspective, it was clear that the play failed to achieve its goal in this case. Nevertheless, we can only judge from these incidents but we cannot tell precisely how many girls have secretly refrained from having abortion after watching the play.

The pivotal motive of the performance was to educate young girls to protect themselves from similar circumstances. In the past, parents initiated rites of passage for the purpose of educating girls about sex, marriage and motherhood (see Mudimbe

1991). The western system of education which has replaced the traditional system of education has ignored this important issue (since many schools did not include sex education in their curriculum). One of the motives of performing Njema was to address this important issue. Some middle class parents discuss the issue with their children. However, since the bulk of the population is made up of the less privileged class whose children are vulnerable to rich men's exploitation, perhaps the playwrights wants sex education to be included in the school curriculum.

The educational authority in the Francophone zone operates a liberal educational policy. The authority allows female students who are pregnant or nursing to enrol in schools. By contrast, the educational authority in the Anglophone community operates a strict moral policy in the sense that it prevents female students who are expecting or pregnant from studying. For example, in 1980, when I was a student in Cameroon College of Arts and Sciences Kumba (In the Anglophone Zone), one of my married friends was dismissed from school because she was pregnant. In spite of her husband's plea, the school administration remained adamant. Her case deterred other girls from becoming pregnant and precipitated the death of other pregnant girls who thought that they would be dismissed from school. For example, in the subsequent year, Miki Georgia who was also in the institution died in the course of performing an abortion. She did not have enough funds to consult a gynaecologist who would have carried out a successful abortion. The medical doctor who attended to her after she had carried out several attempts to get rid of the baby maintained that if Miki had lived, she would had remained childless. His assertion meant that some Anglophone female students who have had an abortion become barren. These sterile women suffer from psychological and emotional agony. They do not enjoy the privileges of motherhood, or marriage since many husbands want children (see also Mudimbe 1991: 144 - 145).

By contrast, in the Francophone zone, a girl is not dismissed from school because she is pregnant or a nursing mother. The educational authorities are liberal. Female students in Mfou Sub-Division who are pregnant or nursing babies pursue further education while their parents look after their children. A girl could decide to have a baby each year and the school administration would not prevent her from

studying. Very few female students in the Francophone sector perform abortion, and³⁶⁰ thus enjoy the happiness of motherhood.

This performance portrayed how the Anglophones' attitude towards female students was very disastrous. Njema died because she knew that the English educational system did not allow pregnant girls to pursue further education. The Anglophones' attitude towards female education is another way through which men control the activities of women. Women are indirectly made to choose between the public domain or to carry on with their prescribed role as child bearers and housekeepers. Many educated women take active part in the public domain as lawyers, doctors, engineers and so on. These professions were normally reserved for men. Among these educated women, a reasonable proportion of them are sterile, and many of the cases are caused by crude abortions. The fear of becoming sterile after having an abortion forces many pregnant girls to prefer to have the babies rather than to suffer the dangers of abortion and becoming branded as unproductive women. Other girls would prefer to get married in their teens and have their babies then. This does not imply that every educated girl is sterile and every girl who marries in her teens is fertile. But it is often said by the Anglophone girls that the proportion of infertile women among the educated of their community out-numbers the number of sterile women among the uneducated. I do not have any data to substantiate this assertion, but it is a commonly held belief among them.

Moreover, as a result of the fact that some Anglophone female students die in the course of abortion whilst some are dismissed from school when they become pregnant, the number of educated Anglophone women is relatively insignificant when compared with the number of educated women in the Francophone zone. Nwei carried out an investigation and discovered that the language of instruction, the teaching methods, the educational programmes, the examination system and the social atmosphere at the University of Yaounde do not favour Anglophone students. Instead, the Francophone students constitute the majority of students (Nwei cited in Forje 1981: 161 - 188). Nwei's findings and the Anglophones' attitude towards female students (who are pregnant or nursing babies), exacerbate the Anglophone's plight. The Anglophones complain that the Francophones discriminate against them, but

Anglophones' attitude towards female education suggests that the Anglophones are also³⁶¹ creating problems for themselves. Perhaps the playwright is implicitly entreating the Anglophone community to change its attitude and adapt the Francophones' attitude towards female students. This would mean creating communal values for the benefit of all Cameroonians. It would mean dismantling anything that separates Anglophones and Francophones. It would also be one of the means of realising a Cameroon identity which would be adored by Francophones and Anglophones alike. It would in turn guarantee the progress of Cameroon.

In Epie Ngome's For Better Or For Worse, Weka asserted that when people drank too much alcohol, they lost their senses. Weka related an event where Garba threw a lavish party for his wives and children (including Weka and her children), and when everyone was drunk, he made them accept that the family would remain indivisible:

Weka And all those women, some of them quite drunk , answered with a deafening,
'Yes, we are'.

Nsangong in Butake's And Palm-Wine Will Flow, maintained that when the stomach was too full, the brain stopped functioning:

Nsongong When there is too much in the belly, the head becomes an empty shell. These playwrights and performers were earnestly pleading to the leaders of the country to stop deadening their subjects with alcohol. Alcohol prevents intellectual initiatives and retards a community's progress.

Butake's The Survivors also described greediness, corruption and so on. During the performance of this play, the officer who was supposed to look after the survivors did the reverse. He monopolised the aid sent to the survivors by philanthropic organisations:

Officer A carton of cooking oil from... Two bags of rice from... Fifty sheep from-, one million frs of cash from..., Five hundred blankets, one hundred sheets and fifty pairs of leather shoes from the friends of the friendless. Two hundred and seventy-five pieces of clothing, and one hundred hurricane lamps, twenty five aladin lamps, and twenty kerosine stoves from the international women of the world...

At this point, the audience which has been wondering why the survivors were starving when aid has been sent from sympathisers understood where the aid had been channelled. The members of the audience actually behaved as though they were watching a real event in real life. Although the officer created fun to make the audience laugh, it remained silent. Indeed, this silent response affected the actor who was playing the role of the officer, thus he limited the degree of fun. Also, Officer showed extreme indifference to the fate of the survivors:

Officer No one cares if they [survivors] survive...

The audience sighed. If these two classes (the privileged and the oppressed) could reconcile their differences, and abide to moral values and good principles, social contentment would prevail and people would channel their resources towards developing the nation.

Eyoh 's The Magic Fruit depicts selfishness and avarice, and calls for Cameroonians to discard these vices. During the performance of The Magic Fruit, Mother 1 taught the children a song with the aim of discouraging them from imitating the errors of the old generation. The song was asking the old generation why they have deviated from their childhood practices. The song reminded adults of their generosity, kindness, and honesty when they were young. But now that they are adults, they have become greedy, dishonest, and cruel:

Come inside our house.
Our mother has cooked a delicious meal.
The games we used to play.
When children still we were.
Now that we have grown up.
We have forgotten all those games.

Can I come?
No.
The bees
Are stinging me.
The mosquitoes
Are biting me.
The ants
Are biting me.
Can I come?
Please don't come.

Eyoh is implicitly suggesting that at a tender age people are closer to God. Moreover the song was a direct plea to children that they should not imitate adults'

negative practices when they grow up. The first stanza depicted the people's attitude³⁶³ when they were young and the second stanza portrayed their behaviour as grown-ups.

Perhaps if Cameroon leaders if the leaders distribute the country's wealth among the different groups (ethnic groups, Anglophones, students, women rulers and ruled, educated and non educated), suspicion and hatred would be non-existent. Trust and love would become two of the national values which every Cameroonian would be proud of.

In Bate Besong's Beasts of No Nation, the Narrator called on the Francophones to change their attitudes. The Narrator began by portraying the Francophones as blind and crippled, as well as torturers. He maintained that Francophones were blind people led by the blind:

Narrator Since the blind lead the blind, both shall fall in a ditch.

Bate Besong is implicitly advocating that Cameroonians should appoint the right people to the right positions. Unless Cameroonians change their attitude to work and put the right persons in the right jobs, irrespective of their ethnic origin, Cameroon has no future prospects and where there is no prospect, the people perish.

Contrasting with the Narrator's view was that of the Cripple who believed that Anglophones could not be trusted and moreover Blindman said Anglophones were themselves disunited:

Cripple Anglos are traitors and slaves.

Blindman Anglos will always write petitions.

The audience laughed and applauded. This response was a result of the fact that the Cameroon community developed the idea that it was a common practice for one Anglophone to write a petition and campaign against another Anglophone. Secondly, the audience applauded because Bate Besong is an Anglophone, and yet, he did not spare the Anglophone community. Instead he used theatre as a weapon to point out the Anglophones' shortcomings. Thus the audience was pleased with this particular remark.

These contrasting views between the 'Anglos' and 'Frogs' which literally refer to Anglophones and Francophones imply that neither Anglophones or Francophones are perfect. Francophones believe that they themselves are sophisticated while the

Anglophones are inferior and naive. By contrast, Anglophones believe that³⁶⁴ Francophones are talkative and impractical. Hence there is mutual disrespect between the two communities (see also Forje 1981: 155 on this subject). Groups in Mundemba (in the Anglophone zone), it was noted earlier, produced theatre that dealt with practical issues while the groups in Mfou (in the Francophone zone) created theatre that dealt with philosophical issues. The audience's response to this Beasts of No Nation indicated that Francophones were aware of the fact that they were characterised as impractical disorganised and sophisticated, and Anglophones understood that they were noted as practical, organised and simple. Also each group believed that it was virtuous whilst the other was imperfect. The playwright is mocking both Anglophones and Francophones who have mutual disrespect for each other. He is implicitly suggesting that if the Anglophones and Francophones stop being censorious towards one another, strive to understand one another, reconcile their cultural differences, and merge the good aspects of the two cultures, Cameroon would have a culture which other nations would envy.

The narrator accused Francophones of transferring money to Swiss banks while the downtrodden were suffering:

Narrator The beasts of Ednuoay city whose money is in Switzerland, P.O.
Europe.

All When frogs eat money the way locusts eat tonnes of green.

This dialogue produced the reverse of what the Narrator expected. He has expected the Francophones in the audience to be dismayed, instead, they joined the Anglophones in applauding. The audience was pleased with this dialogue. It applauded, clapped and repeated the word 'frogs', 'money', 'Switzerland', 'Europe'. The people believed that Cameroon's money was kept by the top government officers in banks in developed countries. Thus they were pleased to hear the performers talk openly about this disturbing issue. Furthermore, the Anglophones in the audience claimed that the Francophones were spendthrifts. Thus when the night-soil men said when frogs ate money the way locusts ate tonnes of green, the Anglophones in the audience were pleased and they screamed with joy. They shouted 'frogs', and some said 'frogs were experts in the profession of eating money'. Many in the audience made

several comments. The noise from the audiences could only be stopped by some of them who said 'shiiiiii', asking for silence. The audience knew too well that politicians and rulers had monopolised the wealth of the a country. It is important to mention that studies conducted prior to the 1990s on the subject on unequal distribution of the country's wealth showed that only ten percent of the population received 60% of the wealth while 90% shared the remaining 40%:

Cameroon experienced a steady five to seven percent growth throughout the 1960s but only ten percent of the population received sixty percent of the income while ninety percent shared the remaining forty percent (Agbor-Tabi 1982).

The advent of the economic crisis in recent years has exacerbated the unequal distribution of the country's wealth among the citizens. Thus the society is divided between very low income and very high income groups. Bate Besong and the performers on stage were earnestly imploring Cameroon rulers and politicians to stop transferring Cameroon francs to developed countries so that the country could progress.

The audience's response to this scene indicated that it disapproved of the privileged groups' (politicians, elites and businessmen) practice of transferring money abroad and was earnestly requesting them to invest money in the country. This new policy would restore the people's confidence in the government and would create economic growth. Already, the government faces problems in carrying out its financial responsibilities, such as paying the arrears of farmers and the salaries of civil servants.

The playwright and the performers were not the first to accuse rich Africans of saving money abroad. Ngugi and Ngugi have emphatically condemned this practice in the play entitled I Will Marry When I Want (Ngugi and Ngugi 1986).

However, the 'Frogs' thought that it was their right to squander Ednuoay's fund. They boasted of squandering all the money in the country without being questioned because their protectors were in the capital of Ednuoay: They sing:

Goat di wack for place weh dey be tie him.	A goat eats where it is tethered.
So my dear frog brother .	So my dear Francophone brothers.
Wack and burn his damnbrubah Ednuoay.	Eat and destroy Ednuoay.

Solo	I fit tief five hundred million sef.	I can steal five hundred million frs.
------	--------------------------------------	---------------------------------------

Chorus	Because my umbrella dey for Ednuoay city.	I will be protected by my brother in the capital of Ednuoay.
--------	--	---

There is a belief that any one whose relative occupies a good position in the government, can commit certain crimes and will not be punished. The audience applauded and said that it was true. The audience associated the events in real life with these performers' assertions. They said that the capital; 'Ednuoay' was Yaounde (the capital of Cameroon), and the brothers referred to by the performers were the top government officials who resided in the capital. Some of them also turned to their neighbours and said 'nobi so? Na so oh' (Is it not true? Its true). Some said the play was actually depicting the truth. Here I found reality and theatre merged. The audience used its knowledge about the social, economic, political and cultural situation of the Cameroon community to make their own interpretations of the play. The audience also showed dissatisfaction with the prevailing situation whereby the privileged and those related to them were the beneficiaries of the country's wealth. In chapter two the GHS Students's performance called on the President of the country to look after all Cameroonians irrespective of the region of origin. In Beasts of No Nation, Bate Besong and the performers on stage reiterated an identical message. The fact that both city and national performances were concerned with this issue indicated that the issue was a major problem, and should be addressed by the rulers of the country.

Considering these Francophones' attitudes in the performance, the land of Ednuoay was destined for ruin. Perhaps the playwright is regretting the fact that a country where people were noted for extravagance and which was administered by the blind had no prospects of development. Thus it suffered economic stagnation.

The Narrator accused Francophones of rejecting the Anglophones' hospitality because of their greediness. Now they were illogical to the point of idiocy. Fonlon had earlier made a similar remark:

Unless the East Cameroon [French-speaking] leaders in whose hands cultural initiative lies, are prepared to share this authority with his brothers from the west [English-speaking Cameroonians], unless he are prepared to make the giant effort to break loose from the straight-jacket of his intellectual probity and admit candidly that there are things in the Anglo-Saxon way of life that can do this country good, there is little chance...for English survival (Fonlon quoted in Arnold 1983: 497 - 515).

However, the Francophones seemed to be ignorant of this call. One might have expected that after the reunification between the two former English and French mandates, the country would fuse both cultures and create a prosperous Cameroon which other developing countries would envy and emulate. But as the playwright, a keen observer of the community, and thinkers and writers clearly point out, this aspiration is only slowly being realised after thirty years of independence because the Francophones think that British legacy has very little to offer the country.

In spite of the Francophones' attitude towards British legacies, they have deviated from the legacy of French culture. Frenchmen have developed France. During the French era, the administrators invested in education, health and infrastructure. Perhaps Cameroonians expected Cameroon administrators and politicians to pick up from where French administrators left off. Instead of fulfilling this expectation, politicians and administrators are solely interested in amassing wealth to the detriment of the country's development. Thus development in all spheres seem to be at a standstill. Moreover, Francophones like many others have not been devotees of African communal culture, which calls for rich members of the community to share their wealth with those in need. In the pre-colonial era, there was the absence of European consumer goods such as cars, televisions, and so on. Furthermore the people ate the same kind of food with the exception of certain delicacies which were reserved for chiefs, courtiers and men. Goody, in his Technology, Tradition and the State in Africa, pointed out that as a consequence of limited technology and low differentiation in terms of levels of consumption, standards of living were not markedly different (Goody 1971: 31). This practice attracted the phrase 'African Socialism'. With the introduction of western goods, Cameroon (particularly Francophones) have deviated from the African communal life-style. Therefore, Francophones have neither followed the traditional African culture which called for the people of a given community to share their wealth with those in need, nor the French culture which motivated the French to develop France.

Like the protagonist, Njoko in the play by the Lycée de Mfou, the Narrator questioned whether the purpose of man's existence was to accumulate material wealth. He said he thought each person should contribute to improve the world either

368
physically or morally. He summed up by questioning whether the present Cameroon's generation has not been a wasted one:

Narrator Be frank, tell me exactly what you think...Has yours not been a wasted generation? You have done nothing for anybody...Like vegetables, you might just as well have never lived.

The audience responded with approval. They clapped and talked among themselves. Elsewhere in the play the Narrator asserted that all directors were corrupt:

Narrator If I find in Ednuoay
 Two righteous Directors
 Then I will spare
 All the place for
 Their sake.

(To audience) Corruption is the national industry of Ednuoay.

Bate Besong borrowed a Biblical style in the Book of Genesis chapter 19, verse 26 where God said to Abraham "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sake".

The playwright adapts the same line of thought as Bettelheim who modifies the dependency theories of Frank, Amin, and their followers by arguing that the West is not solely responsible for under-development in the developing world. The middle-class in developing countries has a share of the blame. Bettelheim writes:

...the inequalities of development seem to be capable of 'correction' through manipulations of prices and wages, whereas only a revolutionary transformation of production relations, with the subsequent development of the productive forces, can make it possible to end the poverty of the dominated countries, which are exploited at one and the same time by imperialism and by their own dominant class (Bettelheim quoted in Edwards 1985: 111 - 2).

The audience was happy and indeed some kept repeating the word 'corruption'. They clapped and shook their bodies. These were things that people would have liked to say but dared not. Also, they did not have the political and economic power and so no one would have listened to them. Here theatre was saying these things, so they were happy and applauded. The Narrator who addressed his question to the audience was satisfied with the sensation he created. The atmosphere was hilarious and joy could be

369
read on people's faces. Many members of the audience learnt that other people contemplated and thought about the same issues. Thus they were relieved. The theatre took these issues off their chests. It expressed in a more powerful way what they all thought and felt. The performance created an arena for the people to share a common thought. The theatre assumed the image of a strong opposition political party to the government.

This play purged people's consciences and stimulated the members of the audience into critically examining the negative consequences of these vices, which were promoting the economic crisis. It questioned whether Cameroon could ever recover from the crisis. The government officials who watched this play did not like the content of the play. They walked out of the hall during an informal discussion which followed the performance. This was no surprise because the play criticised the government officials, directors and so on. Nevertheless, the majority of the audience responded by clapping, applauding, agreeing with some of the issues, nodding and so on. After the performance, some members of the audience said that contemporary Cameroon theatre was fascinating; it was the theatre of the people, and no longer the theatre of the rich. Some said they had developed a love for theatre because it dealt with those issues which were relevant to the Cameroon community. Anglophone national performances depicted the collapse of accepted national morality and ethics in Cameroon. The performances criticised with the aim of edifying the Cameroon community. The performances wanted good moral principles to become traits of the overall Cameroon identity. Such traits would indicate the beginning of a progressive country.

6. B. MORALITY, ETHICS AND NATIONAL SENTIMENTS IN FRANCOPHONE NATIONAL PERFORMANCES.

The performances examined in this section include Abega's Sens Unique and Le Sein t' est Pris, Oyono Mbia's Le Bourbier and Mbala's Bengoula au Cabinet du Ministre.

The last act of Sens Unique, depicted Emo-Milang's desire for Engunkang's manufactured goods. Nki and Meboua wanted the most recent luxurious cars manufactured in Europe. But First Ghost mocked Nki and Meboua for having such desires:

1er revenant Pour toi, ô noble père de Npek, nous pouvons te procurer une
excellente voiturette, le dernier cri de la technologie d' Engunkang.Elle
te fera oublier tes jambes. Il est bientôt l'aube. Je m'en vais dormir.
(Il sort).

The audience jeered and mocked Nki and Meboua who wanted the most recent luxurious car in Engunkang, but instead of acquiring these goods, Nki was made blind and Meboua a cripple. The audience indicated that it was aware of the fact that the play was describing rich Cameroonians.

It could be suggested that the playwright is criticising the system which allows a few citizens to purchase luxurious expensive cars from the west when the people do not have all their basic needs. The playwright is informing Cameroonians that their bottomless desire for western life-style and goods is detrimental to the country. These luxurious cars are very expensive and they drain the country's wealth. Because of this the country remains in perpetual debt. Such a country can never develop. Thus Cameroonians should change their attitude towards western goods. They should develop sentiments for local goods. This change of attitude would lead the country ahead. President Biya advocated that every citizen must have a fair share in the country's wealth:

We will have, in particular, to pursue the establishment of a model society that symbolises the new social order and whose ultimate good is social justice, that is, organizing the

fair distribution of the fruits of our collective effort among the various groups and laying the groundwork for equal opportunities through appropriate measures designed to solve our social, educational, health...wage and other problems (Biya quoted in Sam-Kubam and Ngwa-Nyamboli 1985: 38 - 39).

Furthermore, the playwright is earnestly calling on the President to ensure that every citizen has a fair share in the country's wealth. If the nation's wealth is evenly distributed among all the citizens according to their productivity, there will be social contentment and people will be content to make sacrifices for the purpose of developing the country because they know that they will have a share in the fruits of their labour. In contrast, when the wealth of the nation is monopolised by a few people, social discontentment will prevail and the burning desire to initiate productive contributions deadens. Thus the economy would remain stagnant and such a community would never develop.

The third episode of Abega's Le Sein t' est Pris describes the manner in which the husband appropriates the money from the sales of the wife's breast milk.

We earlier noted that Koum used the earnings he made from the sale of the milk to purchase an expensive French suit and two air tickets which enabled him spend a week end in France.

Once again, Abega is criticising westernised Cameroonians. Instead of the husband investing the money he made from the sale of the wife's breast milk, he prefers to make a pleasure trip to France. He is acting without thought because after squandering all the money, he would become penniless since the wife's breast-milk has dried up. The playwright might be informing Cameroonians that a developing country such as Cameroon is in dire need of a new social order. There must be fundamental change in the people's mentality, comportment and the manner of managing the economy. Without these initiatives, the country remains in perpetual recession.

Oyono Mbia's Le Bourbier was performed by Théâtre National de Yaounde at Café Théâtre on the 23rd March 91 during the Theatre Festival Week of 1991. The play portrays the futility of the visits by government officers to rural regions. According to the message of the play, these visits create poverty in rural areas.

The play is centred around an entourage (a government officer, a porter and a secretary) visiting a village. The play describes the entourage's attitude towards villagers and the villagers' response to the visit. The play also describes the attitude of villagers towards western life-style and the villagers' view about the concept of development.

Scene one described the journey from the city to the village. *Chef de Mission* behaved like a colonial officer. Servants put on his shoes and when he fell and soiled his hands with mud, he cleaned them on his porter's clothes.

Some members of the audience sighed whilst others remained mute. This was an indication that the audience did not approve the attitude of *Chef de Mission*.

This scene showed the extent to which national administrators perpetuated negative colonial attitudes and policies. Scene two depicted the encounter between the visitors and the villagers. The villagers gave their visitors a hearty welcome. The host's first wife presented flowers to *Chef de Mission* and the host introduced his wives. An old man approached the *Chef de Mission* and revealed his identity. He stated that he served in the army during the era of Général Charles de Gaulle, and added that he worked tirelessly in the civil service, but, in spite of his enormous efforts, he had retired and returned to the village without hope and was penniless:

Première épouse:	Bienvenu Monsieur le Chef de Mission.
Hôte	Monsieur Chef de Mission, voilà ma première épouse. Mère de six enfants. Et Julien, ma deuxième épouse; mère de six enfants.
Vieil Homme	Bienvenu Monsieur Chef de Mission.
	Je suis ancien.
	Ancien chef de village.
	Ancien soldat du Général Charles De Gaulle.
	Malgré tout ça, il ne faut jamais désespérer.

Also, the old man believed that these visits were futile, and he asserted mockingly that unless *le grand chef* (probably the head of state) brought civilisation and prosperity, the village was doomed to ruin. The host was angry with Old Man's frankness. He was like the real Chief of Makango in Ndian Division who, as we noted in chapter two, did not want villagers to point out the mistakes of government

administrators. However, the host also wanted the government to realise the³⁷³ devastating effects of the national economic crisis on villagers. The host added that many heads of service had visited the village but the village had not changed:

Hôte On n'a pas réalisé les problèmes et la gravité de la situation de la crise économique. Beaucoup les chefs de service étaient ici, malgré ça, ce village n'a pas changé.

The villagers were disillusioned. Whilst western civilization has destroyed their strong sense of belonging, respect for tradition and custom, and the attractiveness of the rhythm of village life; it has yet not provided the village with anything valuable.

The villagers asked pertinent questions which implied that they were very sensible and could analyse controversial issues just like professional analysts. But *Chef de Mission* who was already drunk was furious with the questions and assertions, and he shouted and intimidated the villagers. He warned that in spite of the economic crisis, the villagers must give the government a little respect:

Chef de mission Malgré la situation de la crise économique...Villageois présentez le gouvernement un peu de respect.

The visitors deviated from their expected duties, and instead intimidated and exploited the villagers' resources such as beer and whisky. These visitors also viewed the husbands who had young beautiful wives with an envious eye. For example, *Chef de Mission*. saw the host's two beautiful young wives and advised each villager to marry one wife and have two children in order to attain a high standard of living. In his opinion, large families were responsible for national underdevelopment. *Chef de Mission*. was reiterating an opinion earlier expressed in the play entitled The Sensible Couple in chapter two.

Before the visitors left the village, the *Chef de Mission* ordered the people to recount their problem. The first wife said that villagers trekked for several kilometres in order to purchase salt from the market at the nearest village. Thus something positive should be done for the village. According to her, it was essential that each village had a market so that villagers would not have to trek long distances to purchase salt. Thus, in her view, the presence of a market in a village was already an aspect of progress. The

second wife said she did not have the means to sponsor her son to attend a good³⁷⁴ university in France:

Deuxième épouse Je n'ai pas le moyen pour mon fils faire des études en France.

Although the second wife was a village housewife, her only ambition was to gain a good education in France for her son. Her attitude clearly showed that even the poor in villages had similar ambitions as the middle class. She fully understood that there was a university at Yaounde, but she preferred her son to study in France. The fact that a poor village housewife looked down on national institutions showed the extent to which French culture penetrated the rural regions. It also proved that, thirty years after independence, the Francophones still aspired towards achievements within the French cultural system. This fact is backed up by the theme of Moungo's Bobo va à l'école in which school children are taught to speak the French language like French citizens. The play was performed by Les Eléphants Noirs at the French Cultural Centre on the 27th March 1991 during Recontres Théâtrales de Yaounde. (During the performance of Bobo va à l'école 75% of the people who were in the hall left fifteen minutes after the play started. The audience maintained that the content of the play was exotic. They wanted plays to deal with the concerns of Cameroonians. Some members of the audience, such as Doho asked why I was wasting time filming the play.

In the case of Le Bourbier, the second wife had perhaps saved her little income for the purpose of sending her son to a good school in France, irrespective of whether the son was intelligent or not. *Chef de Mission* advised the second wife to send her son to the university at Yaounde. Old man who listened silently to the villagers' and visitors' discussion summed up their respective ambitions and promises as dreams:

Vieux Homme Toutes ça c'est les rêves.

According to Old man, *Chef de Mission* would not respect his promises because previous ones had not respected their promises. He was repeating the assertion made by the people at Fabe village in the Bima region. The people at Fabe village claimed that Sub-Divisional Officers who visited their region did not respect the promises they made to the villagers. From their point of view, it was a waste to entertain the entourage. Old man also believed that the woman would not be able to sponsor her son in a good university in France, since she did not have the economic means.

As indicated earlier, the play is about the attitude of government officers to villagers and the futility of their missions to rural regions. Thus the main purpose of performing this play was to criticise both the attitude of government officers towards villagers and the purpose of these futile visits. In the dramatist's view, these visits leave villagers more disillusioned as they are bullied by government officials. The visits also exacerbate poverty in rural regions since villagers use their little income to purchase drinks (whisky and beer) for the visitors. In chapter one, the Megang group's performances rebuked the rich and rulers of the country for their deliberate intention to ignore the poor and the ruled. Also, Bima local performing artists used theatre to rebuke the chief of Makango and the government administrators who deliberately took no notice of the sufferings of the people. The performances maintained that the government administrators were solely concerned with exploiting the poor villagers. Moreover, in chapter three, national performances forcefully rebuked rulers who ignored the plight of the people. This reproof of village leaders, government administrators and the rulers of the country indicated that the people did not want to be ignored and exploited by those who have accepted the responsibility to look after them. The people believed that they have clung to the accepted communal values of generosity, sympathy and kindness and a sense of understanding and objectivity. They wanted every Cameroonian to demonstrate these communal values. This would in turn restore the people's confidence in their government. Social justice and contentment would prevail. These accepted values would eventually become a characteristic of every Cameroonian as well as a trait of the Cameroon identity. Total disillusion, depression and a sense of hopelessness would be so far removed from the daily life of all Cameroonians.

The playwright's criticisms are not limited to top civil servants. He also criticises Cameroonians' desire for western life-style especially among those villagers who look down upon Cameroon's institutions. One such example was the case of the second wife's ambition to give a French education to her son. The playwright is implicitly suggesting that if Cameroonians are very fond of western goods and life-style, then Cameroon's nationalists have the enormous responsibility to persuade the anti-nationalists to change their attitude. Until Cameroonians appreciate home produce

and Cameroon's life-style, there will be no future for national development, since much of the nation's wealth will be used to purchase western goods in order to meet the standards of a western life-style. Thus like Abega, Oyono Mbia traces the roots of underdevelopment in the encounter between the West and Africa, to Africans' desire for western produced consumer goods and services.

If the desire for foreign goods and services could be reduced, the overall demand for home produce and services would increase. This might motivate businessmen to establish industries in order to meet the domestic demand. Also the new industries would absorb the thousands of unemployed people. The new employees would in turn increase the demand for home goods. Furthermore, the rural population would direct much of its attention to the cultivation of edible crops to feed the burgeoning urban population. The increase in villagers' incomes would enable them to increase their demand for the industries' goods. In this respect, there would be a growth in the economy which would create political stability, social contentment, and above all, national progress. Perhaps it is on the basis of this consideration that the playwright criticizes Cameroonians' enormous desire for western goods and services.

Mbala's Bengoula au Cabinet du Ministre was produced and performed by the Theatre Justice Troupe at the Cameroon Cultural Centre on the 24th March 1991 during the Cameroon Theatre Festival of 1991. The play describes the activities in a Minister's cabinet (a cabinet consists of a Minister's office, his reception room, his private secretary's office, the office of the messenger and a room where visitors wait for the Minister to attend to them). It is a subtle satire on disrespect for the public, bribery, inefficiency and frustration among civil servants in the ministries.

The cabinet consisted of three offices. The Minister's office was furnished with a modern table, a beautiful armchair (where the Minister sat), and two chairs (for visitors). The secretary's office had a table and two chairs, and the office boy's office was furnished with a chair and a table. Thus visitors who were received by the office boy were bound to stand throughout the duration of the visit.

The play began with the office boy. He was tidying the offices. He finished and was very moody. It is worth noting that in reality many office boys in the government ministries are usually moody - particularly in the absence of their bosses. Perhaps this

is due to the fact that their salaries fall short of satisfying their demands or their job,³⁷⁷ which is often boring, or they do not appreciate the manner in which they are treated by their bosses .

The secretary walked in. She looked very elegant in her dress and shoes and had a bag over her shoulder. Her hair was beautifully styled. The office boy greeted her but she felt superior and thus did not respond. Rather, she walked proudly into her office. She entered it and looked around, examined her table and chairs and became furious when she noticed that they were covered in thick dust. She shouted at the top of her voice, calling for the office boy to explain why the furniture had not been properly cleaned:

Secrétaire Planton, planton

Planton Chef !

Secrétaire Tu n'a pas nettoyé ce matin ?

Planton Je

Secrétaire Mais c'est pas propre. Il y avait une épaisse couche de poussière sur la table. La chaise est couverte de poussière.

A villager entered the office boy's office. He was wearing trousers, a nice shirt, a tie, a beautiful blazer, a hat, and was carrying a bag, but he walked barefooted. He greeted the office boy, but the latter turned away in the opposite direction. He was in a bad mood because his meagre salary was not sufficient to meet his needs and because of the treatment he received at the hands of the secretary. The playwright is implicitly reminding secretaries, directors and so on that their appalling attitude towards office boys and messengers seems so remote from humanity. They should change so that office boys can derive job satisfaction.

He turned abruptly and asked the villager whether he lived on greetings. He wanted the villager to give him a bribe. He was also angry because the villager had addressed him *monsieur* instead of *chef*. The villager politely and ironically asked whether he too lived on greetings. He understood that the office boy wanted to be referred to as *chef*. It is worth noting that most Francophone middle class Cameroonians want to be referred to as *chef*:

Villageois Bonjour Monsieur (3 times).

Planton Mais quoi ? Qu'est-ce que c'est ? Bonjour à qui. Bonjour à madam ?

Villageois Bonjour chef !

Planton Moi, je ne mange pas le bonjour. Vous entendez. Je ne mange pas le bonjour.

Villageois Moi même qui dit bonjour est-ce que je mange le bonjour?

The villager wanted to see the secretary, but the office boy did not allow him to because the villager had not offered a bribe. The villager left and a young lady entered the office. She greeted the office boy who, as usual, refused to respond. However, he accused her of refusing to greet him in the street and asserted that it was his turn to look down on her. The lady ignored his remarks and insisted on seeing the Minister. Her request to see the Minister was granted but when she introduced herself as *mademoiselle*, the office boy became furious. He said she should marry instead of moving from one office to another trying to see Ministers. In Cameroon, many people believe that a woman who remains unmarried is flawed in some way. His remark kindled a quarrel. The lady said that the office boy was not fit to serve the public and that God was right to deprive him of an enviable position such as that of a director, a minister or even a president. The office boy derived satisfaction from making the young lady angry. He succeeded as the young lady left the office furious. It seemed that the office boy was trying to inform the public that every job no matter how lowly was important. The office boy was suggesting an opinion first expressed by Njoko's concubine in chapter two. From the point of view of the office boy and Njoko's concubine the privileged class should respect the down-trodden. However, the office boy transmitted his message in an uncivilised manner. By insulting the young lady, he violated the accepted principles of the community.

The villager returned to the office but the office boy would again not allow him to see the secretary unless he offered a bribe. The villager knew only too well that without a bribe the office boy would not allow him to see the secretary. Thus he offered a bribe:

Villageois Bonjour Monsieur. S il vous plait, je veux voir le chef.

Planton Le chef est sorti.

Villageois Vous me dites la même chose tous les jours. Est-ce que je laisse ma demande de travail?

Planton A qui ?

Villageois Vous savez que je viens du village Monsieur prendre, acheter quelque chose.

The office boy took the bribe, and thus proceeded to inform the secretary that there was a villager who wanted to see her. The secretary did not want to receive the villager but the office boy had already received the bribe, and so could not send him away. Thus he stated that the villager had insisted on seeing her, and that she had no option but to receive him:

Secrétaire Je n'admets pas les villageois ici.

Planton Il insiste pour te voir.

The audience jeered when the secretary said she did not admit villagers in her office. Some members of the audience said 'the *chef* does not admit villagers in her office'. The audience mocked a civil servant who refused to carry out her duties. Civil servants are not encouraged to discriminate people on the basis of class or regional background.

Immediately the villager set foot in the office, he was asked to remove his newly purchased shoes and to button his blazer. He greeted the secretary but addressed her as *mademoiselle* instead of *madame*. The secretary became furious and ordered the villager to leave her office:

Secrétaire Enlève tes chaussures et boutonne ton blazer.

Villageois Bonjour mademoiselle.

Secrétaire Qui est mademoiselle?.

Villageois Ah! Bonjour madame.

Secrétaire Sort !

Villageois Vous me chassez comme un animal?.

The reception the villager got from the secretary proved that she and the office boy were not different with regard to their attitude towards the public. Both treated visitors with disrespect. As the villager was leaving the office, the secretary ordered him to be seated and asked how she could help. The villager said he had six wives and

many children. He added that the economic crisis was particularly severe in his village. As a consequence, he had to look for a job in the public service. In Abega's Le Sein t'est Pris, the wife preferred to live in the village rather than in the city¹, and she believed that with the advent of the economic crisis, life was less costly in the village than in the city. In contrast, this play showed that villagers were tremendously affected by the economic crisis, and thus wanted to be absorbed into the public service. The irony was that people left the villages in search for jobs in the cities, while those already there could not find employment and wanted to return to the village.

The villager left and the secretary realised that she was supposed to be in a meeting at 10 a. m. She ordered the office boy to her office and told him about her financial problems. She added that she was on her way to attend a meeting but if the minister asked, he should say she has taken her sick baby to the hospital:

Secrétaire J'ai la réunion à dix heures.. Alors si monsieur le Ministre me demande. Dis lui que...

Planton Vous êtes parti à la réunion ...

Secrétaire Quoi ?

Planton Excusez-moi. C'est ma bouche.

Secrétaire Si Monsieur le ministre me demande, dis-lui que mon enfant est malade.

The audience did not wait for the office boy to respond. It echoed 'oui madam'. The audience acted as though the command was directed to it. The audience's response created a lot of laughter in the hall.

The office boy did not approve of the secretary's attitude towards her job and grumbled after she has left. He faced the audience and said:

Planton Cette femme ne reste jamais dans le bureau plus d' une minute. C'est moi qui fait tout le travail. Chaque fois elle dit : 'mon enfant est malade'.

Civil servants constitute the bulk of the employees in Cameroon. The message of this performance was that a country which aspired for development must work hard. However with the attitude of the office boy (whose main aim was to receive bribes from unemployed people) and the secretary (who spent very few hours in her office), the country could not progress.

As the secretary left the office, the office boy decided to take her position temporarily. He sat on her chair, looked at the files and looked curiously at some papers. He threw the papers which did not appeal to him in the dust bin. Amongst those he threw away was the villager's application for employment.

The villager returned later to enquire about his application. He was delighted to find out that the office boy had been promoted to the rank of the secretary. The office boy, who was desperately in need of money, persuaded the villager to purchase all the items on the secretary's table at a give-away price, yet neither of them fully understood the value of the office equipment:

Planton Vous paiez combien pour le reçu?

Villageois Vingt cinq francs.

Planton Quoi? Pour un reçu?

Villageois Je ne sais pas. Je viens du village.

The secretary returned abruptly and the office boy quickly arranged the papers and asked the villager to hide under the table. But the villager could not remain under the table forever and eventually he came out. The secretary was dumbfounded at what she saw but nevertheless attended to the villager. She asked him to return after one month, but the villager complained about the fare from the village to the city:

Villageois Moi, je suis venu au rendez-vous. Vous m'avez dit que je dois repasser après un mois

Secrétaire Repasse après un mois, je suis occupé.

Villageois Repasser?

Secrétaire Oui, après un mois.

Villageois Comprenez-moi chef. Je suis au village. Pour revenir ici, c'est difficile. C'est trop chef. Comprenez chef. Repasser après un mois, repasser après deux mois. Les transports vont augmenter. Bon chef.

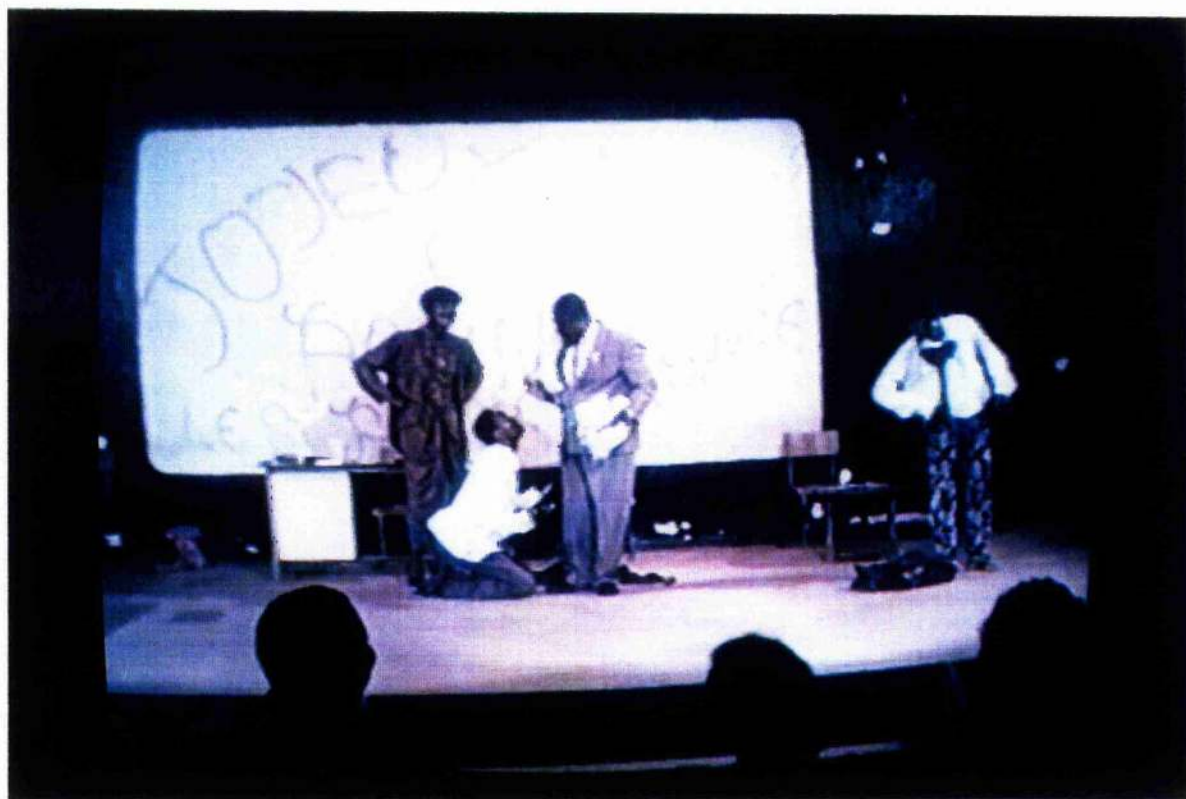
The secretary looked for the villager's application but could not find it, since the office boy has thrown it in the dust bin. The villager noticed that his application was missing and asked the secretary to return it:

Villageois Ayeh! Rend-moi ma demande.

Secrétaire Ne me dérange pas.



Picture Number 29. Villageois attacks the secrétaire in Bengoula au Cabinet du Ministre.



Picture Number 30. Planton asks for forgiveness from the Minister in Bengoula au Cabinet du Ministre.

The villager accused the secretary of negligence. He said that for over six months, the secretary has repeatedly given him several appointments but nothing has happened. It is worth noting that Cameroon operates under a centralised bureaucratic system. Thus Yaounde (the administrative headquarters) is the meeting point of all the civil servants in the country since each civil servant goes to Yaounde to ensure that his document arrives at the appropriate ministry. In some instances the documents cannot be traced by those who have been charged with the responsibility of handling them. Thus there are instances where civil servants, particularly those from the provinces, attack those who have been charged with the duty of dealing with these documents. It is in this respect that when Biya became the President in 1982, he proclaimed that he would decentralise the system. However, his noble policy has not been implemented. Thus this playwright uses theatre as a tool through which he can remind the President to put his good intentions into practice.

To return to the performance, the villager was determined to resolve the issue. He started looking for his document on the secretary's table. She became angry and told him to stop touching items on her table, and to leave her office. In spite of her command, the villager was determined to look for his document:

Secrétaire Ne dérange pas ma table. Sort.

Villageois Je ne vous dérange pas. Je cherche ma demande. Je ne sort pas.

In the course of preventing the villager from touching documents on her table, the villager and the secretary started a fight (see picture number 29). The office boy intervened and the secretary ordered the villager to leave the office, but he still refused to leave. The audience joined the performance by repeating the villagers decision:

Planton: Le chef demande de sortir.

Villageois Dis au chef que je veux ma demande. C'est simple.

Audience Dis au chef que il veut ta demande. C'est simple.

By repeating the villager's statement, the audience showed disapproval of the secretary's negligence of duty.

The playwright is criticising the civil servants for failing to take proper care over the discharge of their duties, and this leads to a misuse of everyone's time. I noted in chapter two that one of the themes of the GHS Mundemba Students' Play revolves

around the problem of absenteeism among teachers who travel to Yaounde to follow up their documents in the government ministries. Many hours of schooling are lost because of this. Mballa, here, draws everyone's attention to the inefficiency that prevails in the civil service. Unless this problem is brutally attacked, there can be no prospects for national development.

Because the document could not be found, the villager once again attacked the secretary, and thus they both started fighting. The noise in the secretary's office attracted the Minister's attention, and he rushed in to find out what was happening. The secretary told the Minister that she did not know why the villager was disturbing her. But the villager related his story:

Secrétaire Monsieur le Ministre, je ne sais pas pourquoi l' homme me dérange dans mon bureau.

Villageois Je suis arrivé ici depuis six mois...Je laissé ma demande...Sans réponse...Monsieur Le Ministre. Chaque fois, elle me dit de "repasser Lundi". Je reviens Lundi, elle dit "repassse Mardi". Je reviens Mardi, elle dit "repassse Mercredi"...Jeudi...Vendredi. Monsieur Le Ministre...

Monsieur Le Ministre C'est comme ça que vous faites ici?

Secrétaire Non Monsieur Le Ministre.

The villager showed the Minister the document which had been signed by the secretary. He further showed the receipt which he bought from the office boy at twenty five frs. While the Minister was questioning the secretary, the villager found his document in the dust bin and showed the Minister:

Villageois Ayeh! Monsieur Le Ministre! Voilà ma demande.

The Minister was embarrassed and told the office boy and the secretary to leave the office. The office boy pleaded for forgiveness (See picture number 30). The playwright is suggesting that civil servants who do not carry out their duties as expected should be punished or their employment terminated. The performance ended with the Minister talking gently to the villager, promising the villager that he would handle his case, and pleading to the audience that Cameroonians should join the

administrators in fighting irresponsible civil servants and negative attitudes such as corruption, a callous disregard for the public and so on.

The central message of this play dwells on inefficiencies, moral decadence, lack of commitment and disrespect for the public by low income civil servants. In the playwright's view, the people at the bottom of the hierarchy are solely responsible for inefficiency in the civil service and the nation's underdevelopment. By contrast, Doho in his Le Crâne suggests that the rulers of a country are solely responsible for the country's underdevelopment.

The purpose of the performance was to inform the government that civil servants had neglected their duties. Instead, they had other priorities. The performance called for the government to look into these issues if it intended to take the country ahead. According to the message of the performance, with the attitude of civil servants, the country was far from advancing. The playwright considers development in terms of a combination of high morality, respect for others, commitment, and devotion to one's duty.

The style of the performance was subtle. The playwright uses a Minister's cabinet to portray the inefficiency in the civil service. The Minister's cabinet therefore becomes the microcosm through which the people see these shortcomings.

Everyone in the audience who had visited any of the ministries in Yaounde for an official or a private purpose identified with the play. The play was not portraying something new but merely reaffirming the activities in the ministries. It was also requesting civil servants to change their attitudes towards their jobs. In a country where people are not genuinely committed to their jobs, they cannot render satisfactory services. Furthermore, because the audience understood the message, it shouted loudly at the office boy when he took a bribe. This indicates that Cameroonians do not approve of bribes or of disrespect for others. The audience also jeered at the secretary when she left the office during official working hours under the pretext that her child was sick. It is worth noting that in Cameroon, employees who have the same qualification earn the same salary irrespective of sex. Hence in order to prove that the system is not biased against male employees, female employees should work as hard as male employees. The audience applauded when the Minister terminated the office boy's

appointment. Finally the audience agreed with the Minister's plea that Cameroonians should join the administrators in fighting against irresponsible civil servants. Their response was a collective disapproval about these moral issues. After the performance, a government representative, who was one of the audience, said in a speech, the performance was 'natural'. Perhaps he meant realistic.

The Francophone national performances discussed in this chapter traced the impediments of national development from the encounter between the West and Africa. This encounter created moral decadence that has become a conspicuous characteristic of Cameroon. These Francophone national theatre practitioners believe that the country will advance if Cameroonians develop particular sentiments towards their country. For example, if people like Nki and Meboua in Abega's Sens Unique and the husband in the same playwright's Le Sein t' est Pris, together with the second wife in Oyono Mbia's Le Bourbier, develop preferences for local goods, life-style and institutions, the country will progress. Furthermore, if the civil servants change their callous disregard for the public, stop taking bribes and start maximise working hours, Cameroon will advance. Thus all these performances are earnestly calling on Cameroonians to strive for moral rectitude - a call which President Biya championed during his early years in office:

President Paul Biya advocates a change of heart before a change of action dictated by the new heart. In nearly all his speeches to the nation, he courageously denounces human weaknesses and stresses the obligation of Cameroonians to reform themselves. He denounces those social flaws which are likely through the weakening of the national conscience and the sense of the common good, to compromise national cohesion and unity and to turn people's attention from the real task of nation building...The best ideas and the best institutions are worthless if there are no men and women to embody or implement them. Hence this is also the moment to further mobilize by new ways of thinking and new attitudes, tolerant and open to discussion, imbued with a sense of duty as well as appropriateness, competent and experience, simply and upright and who are above all, deeply devoted to the service of Cameroon and Cameroonians Our ambition is to usher in a Cameroonian Society which is founded on the solidarity of ideas, the search for efficiency and sound values, which encourages the full development of the Cameroon and is the centre of cultural influence in Africa (Biya, quoted in Sam-Kubam and Ngwa-Nyamboli 1985: 37).

The national performances discussed in this chapter have shown that there was something morally wrong in the society. There was a mood of national sadness reflected in the audiences' responses to the performances. The performances were primarily concerned with greed, corruption, a disregard for the people and so on. These performances had features of the morality plays in the 14th century England which dealt with human vices, such as greed and avarice in a play entitled Everyman. The performances called for love, honesty, straightforwardness, kindness, concern for others, and development of appropriate national sentiments. These were the values which the performances stood for: a symbol of change from negative to positive attitudes. The attainment of these values would endow Cameroon with a cultural identity which every Cameroonian would be proud of.

The performances primary aim has been to edify the society, encourage moral uprightness and also to encourage Cameroonians to develop strong national sentiments. The people would be transformed from an immoral society to one with moral rectitude; from a people without a sense of nationhood to nationalists. When these calls are achieved, the country will move forward, it would develop.

¹ Her view coincided with that of Rousseau. Rousseau believed that cities were the final pit of human spirit. Jones also held the opinion that the city offered disease and misery, poverty and want to millions; at its worst it made life cheap and human values worthless (Jones 1967: 1).

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Having described and analysed village, city and national performances in the two representative zones, it is important that I summarise my findings. I will list my findings and later elaborate each point. Cultural Action Theatre is somehow different from Theatre for Development and the contemporary political milieu and economic situation in the country determines the issues raised in theatrical performances as well as the responses of the audiences. Furthermore, in the absence of public demonstrations, theatre became one of the channels through which theatre practitioners and audiences expressed their social, economic, political and cultural opinions. Occasionally, an audience remained in the hall with the intention of discussing the issues raised in a performance. Moreover, oppressed groups (women, students, people with no political and economic power) used theatre as a medium through which they could channel messages to their superiors (men, chiefs, government administrators, the rulers of the country and politicians).

In this respect, theatre and rituals have similar functions as both are used to address superior beings. Anglophone theatre practitioners produced theatre that dealt with practical issues and also used a simple style. In contrast, the Francophone theatre practitioners produced theatre that was more concerned with moral, philosophical and national issues and they used a sophisticated style to communicate messages. The relationship between Anglophone and Francophone is not built on solid foundations as many English-speaking Cameroonians want. Furthermore, the Cameroon people do not want selfish authoritarian rulers, be they village chiefs, the government administrations or the rulers of the country. The theatrical performances were prophetic and their prophecy came true. Theatre practitioners and audiences joined politicians and economists in depicting the negative effects of the fall in cash crops, and city theatre practitioners used theatre as a medium through which they could oppose the views raised in theatrical performances by other city theatre practitioners. The costumes and stage property of many of the performances reflected the area in which they were set,

strengthened regional as well as national identities. Furthermore, the use of particular languages united members of the audience with a common interest, endowed the group (such as gender, class or region) with a linguistic and political identity. Occasionally, the use of a particular language divided members of an audience into groups of interests, such as social and regional. Theatre practitioners and audiences had different perceptions about the term development. A play which demands people to take action must suggest the advantages that must accompany the actions required.

Cultural Action Theatre is in many aspects different from Theatre for Development. The latter is dominated by theatre activists (university lecturers and students of theatre art, development officers and educationists). The audience of Theatre for Development occasionally consider theatre activists intruders who pry into the former's life-style, and thus resent the 'intruders'. By contrast, Cultural Action Theatre is produced by members of the community. For example, the Bimas produced theatre for the Bimas, the people of Mundemba city produced theatre for the Mundemba population and for their visitors, the Anglophones produced theatre for the Anglophones and for the Cameroon community. Theatre practitioners have profound knowledge about the concerns of the people, and thus deal with those issues which are relevant for its community. Due to this fact, the audience does not resent theatre practitioners.

Cultural Action Theatre is long-lived and it is less costly, because it is produced by the people themselves. By contrast, Theatre for Development is short-lived and it involves enormous cost and organisation. For example, renowned troupes, such as the international troupe which launched workshops on Theatre for Integrated Rural Development in Zimbabwe and Cameroon in the early 1980s had not launched further workshops due to the fact that the project was costly and it was difficult to reassemble theatre activists from different countries.

Another contrast between Theatre for Development and Cultural Action Theatre lies in the fact that Theatre for Development addresses the problems of a particular audience. For example, the performance might be requesting the people of a given community to compromise their differences and construct a bridge (see Eyoh 1986). If the performance fails to achieve this purpose, it is considered a failure. Cultural Action

Theatre goes beyond addressing the entire audience and demanding prompt results to addressing identified groups in the theatre (theatre hall). For example, during the performance of Le Sein t' est Pris, the content of the play appealed to different interests groups in the Amphi theatre. The women who watched the play proclaimed that the play was about the exploitation of women, the people maintained that the play dealt with class stratification in the community: a situation whereby the rich exploited the poor. Others asserted that the play was about the exploitation of developing countries by developed countries

Biya's succession to power and his advocacy of freedom of speech introduced a new form of exciting media in Cameroon. Newspapers described political scenes, CRTV (Cameroon Radio and Television) broadcasted political opinions. Biya's years witnessed the emergence of Cultural Action Theatre which uncovered the shortcomings of the entire Cameroon community, created in people a sense of identity and a desire to progress. Theatre practitioners gradually moved away from being ardent black comedians and became serious tragedians, thereby dealt with the relevant concerns of the community. Also, the audience steadily became audible, instead of a silent audience. Theatre practitioners and audiences loudly expressed their views about social, economic, political and cultural issues in the country. For example, during the performance of Sens Unique which dealt with unequal trade between developed and developing countries, members of the audience said a leader who exaggerated the riches of his country encouraged exploiters. Also during the performance of Doho's Le Crâne, the audience blatantly maintained that the performance described the leadership crisis and political instability in the country. In other words, theatre became an effective form of mass media.

Theatre therefore created an arena whereby people with no political power assembled to discuss contemporary Cameroon's issues under the cover of discussing the issues raised in theatrical performances. The stage and theatre building protected performers and audiences from the government's threat. In this respect, theatre was privileged over other forms of the media, such as the newspaper, radio and television in the sense that political opinions expressed in newspapers and CRTV were taken seriously by the government. No wonder, many people became theatre practitioners

and theatre goers. Some theatre goers, indeed, asserted that they loved watching the new excited theatre, because it unveiled hidden controversial issues, dealt with the contemporary concerns of the people and also created an arena as well as an opportunity for theatre practitioners and audiences to express their views about these issues.

Their assertion could be substantiated with the fact that during the performance of Bobo Va à l'école which was performed by Les Eléphants Noirs du Mounjo at the French Cultural Centre on 27th March 1992, 75% of the audience left fifteen minutes after the performance began. Some members of the University staff who watched the play, such as Doho asked why I was wasting time to film the play. The audience claimed that the play whose subject was to teach Cameroon children to speak French as middle class Parisians did not appeal to them, because imitating the French accent was not relevant to contemporary Cameroon community. They wanted plays which dealt with the contemporary concerns and experiences of the Cameroon Community. It is here that theatre calls for the affirmation of local identities as opposed to importing other cultures that may be inimical to the indigenous people.

Without the rise of Biya and his advocacy of freedom of speech, theatre practitioners would have remained renowned black comedians and the audience would have cautiously remained silent. In the days of Late President Ahidjo, Butake's And Palm-Wine Will Flow, Eyoh's Munyenge, Bate Besong's Beasts of No Nation and Requiem For the Last Kaiser, Doho's Le Crâne, Abega's Sens Unique would not have been performed because these performances criticised leaders of fictional countries. If the theatre practitioners had stubbornly staged the plays, they would have been sent to jail, and theatre goers who genuinely expressed their views and feelings about the issues raised in the performances would have been detained in police cells.

The sudden emergence of daring theatre practitioners and the gradual disappearing of a silent audience implies that the political milieu of a given country directly affects the nature of theatre and the response of the audience. A country which suppresses freedom of expression encourages black comedians, whilst a country which practices freedom of speech produces realistic theatre. From this point of view,

President Biya deserves credit for his courage to introduce freedom of speech in the country.

Audiences' profound knowledge about the issues raised in the performances enabled them to penetrate into theatre practitioners' minds, comprehend the latter's messages but analysed the issues raised in performances from their (audiences') own perspectives. For example, during the performance of And Palm-Wine Will Flow, some members of the audience maintained that the play was about the leadership crisis in the country, and suggested that the playwright should not have given a solution to the problem. The audience wanted the playwright to leave the play open so that members of audience could debate over the leadership crisis and could make their own proposals.

A given performance appealed to different interest groups in theatre. These different interest groups gave different interpretations to the performance. For example, the performance of Le Sein t' est Pris appealed to the different interest groups in the audience. The women who watched the play maintained that the play was about the exploitation of women by men. Some of the people who watched the play asserted that the play was about the exploitation of the people by the middle class represented by Koum, while others asserted that the play unravelled the exploitation of developing countries by developed countries. These interpretations were not like surface and deeper meanings or like layers of meanings such as layers of onions: they were distinct meanings, such as plantains and yams. By contrast, the audience did not give distinct interpretations to other performances, instead, they provided the surface and deeper meanings of the performances. For example, during the performance of Abega's Sens Unique, members of the audience who were merely interested in the entertainment aspect of the play grasped the surface meaning of the play. Others who were attentive searched for the underlying meaning of the play and asserted that the play described trade between developed and developing countries, and the attitude of developing countries' leaders. Some members of the audience did not only understand the underlying message of the play but searched for the purpose of the play. This was the group which delved into all the layers of the onion. For example, The Minister of Information and Culture, who represented the government congratulated all the theatre

practitioners who contributed to make the play, but added that if Mbutuku was as stupid as he was portrayed in the performance and if the terms of trade were as bad as they were depicted in the performance, then Mbutuku must re-examine his character and Emo-Milang must reconsider its terms of trade, and thus should think wisely and act quickly. In a sense, he was implicitly advising Cameroon's leader and Cameroonians to re-examine their various contributions to the country's economy, and that the rulers of developing countries were not as stupid as they were portrayed in the performance. In this respect, the performance was like an onion with many layers. Such theatrical performances reached 'multiple targets'.

A playwright would have a specific message to communicate to the audience, but the audience would give their own interpretations. A case in point was Bate Besong's Beasts of No Nation. Bate Besong intended to portray the plight of the English-speaking Cameroonians. But the audience interpreted the play beyond the playwright's main motive by suggesting that the play was about the exploitation of the people (both Anglophones and Francophones) by the rulers.

The reunification between Anglophones and Francophones is built on shaky foundations. The Anglophones are not satisfied with the reunification. For example, after the performance of Eyoh's The Magic Fruit, members of the audience asserted that the performance suggested that the Anglophones were treated unfairly by the Francophones. Eyoh's Ma Mende in The Inheritance implicitly maintained that an Anglophone could not become the leader of Cameroon. Bate Besong carried this belief further by making his protagonist, the Narrator in Beasts of No Nation to instigate his fellow shitologist (the Anglophones) to rebel. The Narrator said 'a warrior goes to war to die'. Epie Ngome's Weka in his For Better and For Worse entreated the Anglophone community to secede. The separation of Garba and Weka logically implied that there was a possibility for the Anglophones to secede. In spite of the performances' portrayal of the Anglophones' dissatisfaction with the reunification, the audiences' mixed feelings and opposing opinions clearly reflected the views of Anglophones' and hinted that the present Anglophone generation was disunited just as the old Anglophone generation which led the Anglophones into a reunification with former French Cameroon in 1961. The present Anglophone generation can not compromise their

differences which will in turn enable Anglophones to liberate themselves from what they implicitly regard as 'bondage'. Notwithstanding the Anglophone theatre practitioners' dissatisfaction with the reunification, Anglophones would protect Cameroon's interest against foreign countries.

Cameroonians are dissatisfied with the economic and political relationship between Cameroon (representing developing countries) and developed countries. For example, in Beasts Of No Nation, the Narrator said 'our foreign friends would help us'. In Bate Besong's The Requiem For the Last Kaiser, (to which I alluded in the study) the Ambassador advise Ahkrikikii (the leader of a developing country) to suppress his people to the point where he can destroy their mental ability, and the Swiss Banker asserts that Ahkrikikii is a beast. Abega's Mbutuku (a representative of developing countries) in Sens Unique was tricked by the ghosts (representatives of developed countries) to lose his natural resources (diamond and gold) and agricultural produce (cocoa, coffee and groundnuts). Furthermore, the ghosts inflicted Mbutuku with a hunchback and a lame leg. These performances portrayed the view that developed countries exploited developing countries. This view had been proclaimed by historians, economists and politicians, such as Frank, Amin, and their followers who maintained that unequal trade between the developed world and developing countries was solely responsible for underdevelopment in developing countries. In this respect, theatre educates local people and raises their consciousness about issues which take place at the national and international levels.

Women who lack political and economic powers use theatre as one of the means through which they can express their social, economic, political and cultural views in their respective communities. For example, the women at Fabe village used theatre to appeal to the conscience of the government administration, the CWF women used theatre to appeal to the conscience of their husbands and to articulate their views about the negative aspects of a culture dominated by men. The Megang group used theatre to articulate their views about the rulers of the country and the privileged class, and the female teachers in École Populaire de Mfou used theatre to uncover the negative effects of the economic crisis. Theatre is therefore an effective weapon in the hands of women as it gives them a means of expression.

The Cameroon men have mixed feelings in their desire to initiate women into national politics. For example, in Butake's And Palm-Wine Will Flow, the women murdered their tyrannous fon. But it was a man who succeeded the late ruler. In Butake's The Survivors, Mboysi, the woman who saved the survivors from perishing in the desert was shot at the end of the performance. In Eyoh's The Inheritance, Ma Mende died in the process of restoring political stability in her country. Doho's Le Crâne showed how Mafo and Maiak played prominent roles in restoring political stability in Tatou village. However, Maiak died in the process. These performances suggested that the Cameroon men want women to participate in politics but will not allow women to have prominent positions, such as the President of the country. In Abega's Le Sein t'est Pris, Nam was not only a political victim in her society, she was a victim of global political and economic exploitation. Her breast milk was used to feed the West, developing countries' rulers, while she and her child starved. Although these performances aimed at elevating the social status and the political powers of women, they only managed to portray women as the political victims of their respective countries.

Cultural Action Theatre and rituals play similar functions. Members of a community use ritual as the only means of communicating with their gods and ancestors, the remote supernatural beings. Cultural Action Theatre was also used by oppressed groups, such as women, students, and the people as a means of articulating their respective opinions to their superiors (men, chiefs, the government administrators, the rulers of the country and politicians) who were considered to be too remote from the former. Cultural Action Theatre and rituals create unintended social occasions, and both give their respective audiences a sense of belonging, solidarity and identity.

The fall in the price of cocoa enormously affected the people of Cameroon. The Fabe women and the people of Esoki Bima villages produced sketches of theatrical performances which dealt with the plight of villagers as a result of the fall in the price of cocoa as well as the government's inability to pay farmers. The play entitled Médecine Traditionnelle dealt with the consequences of the fall in the price of cocoa. The play described a rise in the crime rate as a consequence of the fall in the price of cash crops. This was clear when a farmer resorted to traditional medicine. But because he had not

acquired a skill in the profession, he deceived his customers. Lastly, Abega's Sens Unique portrayed the plight of developing countries as a result of the terms of exchange between developing countries' cash crops and developed world's manufactured goods and services. The terms of trade disfavoured developing countries whilst the West was the beneficiary. The fact that the theme of cash crops persistently resounded in village, city and national performance portrayed the importance of cash crops to Cameroon. It also instigated the government officials to attend more positively to the problems faced by local producers and to ensure that farmers had more lucrative prices.

Children's performances were merely used by adults to communicate their ideas. For example, the CPDM woman Sub-President of Mundemba used the nursery school children to convey her message to the Mundemba people. The female teachers of École populaire de Mfou used school children to communicate their ideas in theatrical performances. Also, Eyoh used the Yaounde Children Collective Theatre to convey his messages in The Magic Fruit and Munyenge. The Children's theatre I watched was in a sense, adults' theatre because it communicated the ideas of adults, and the audiences were dominated by adults.

The style employed by Anglophone and Francophone theatre practitioners to transmit their respective messages differed. Anglophone theatre practitioners transmitted their messages in a straightforward style. For example, the songster at Makango village in the Bima region enacted a song drama which explicitly called on the government administrators to stop exploiting the poor villagers. The women of the women's centre performed a play which called on WWF and the government to allow the indigenous people to carry out hunting expeditions in their land. Bate Besong's Beasts Of No Nation called on the Francophones to stop exploiting oil in the Anglophone region. Due to the fact that the Anglophones used a blatant style, in conveying their messages, they annoyed the government. Thus occasionally, they found themselves in police cells. For example, Bate Besong was detained in a police cell after the performance of this play Beasts Of No Nation. Also, Epie Ngome lost his enviable position as the chief editor of the English version of the national news in CRTV partially because his play For Better and For Worse which was performed in

March 1992, explicitly called on the Anglophone to secede. This implies that President's Biya's freedom of speech has limitations.

In contrast, many Francophone theatre practitioners used a subtle style in transmitting their messages. For example, the Megang group used the symbols of pygmies and lepers to refer to the privileged class and the disprivileged class. Njandja in his play La Recherche du Graal used the plight of an unemployed university graduate to articulate the negative accompaniments of unemployment and the effects of the economic crisis. Abega used a trade between fictitious countries (Emo-Milang and Engunkang) to unveil the hindrances (particularly unequal trade between developed and developing countries) of national development. Also in Le Sein t'est Pris, Abega used a nuclear family's dispute to show the role of Cameroonians in the country's underdevelopment. Because Francophone national theatre practitioners used a sophisticated style in transmitting their messages, they did not expose themselves to government's threat, because they could claim that their plays were misread. In addition, because the Francophones theatre practitioners used a subtle style, each of their performances was subjected to many interpretations. For example, Abega's plays Sens Unique and Le Sein t'est Pris provoked multi-faceted interpretations from the respective audiences.

One reason accounts for the opposing styles used by Anglophone and Francophone theatre practitioners. Francophone theatre practitioners thought that the Francophones were the privileged group in Cameroon, so they did not want to use a straightforward style which might overtly annoy the government. Instead they used a delicate style. By contrast, the Anglophone theatre practitioners who considered the Anglophone group to be in a subordinate position in the country used a blatant style because they had nothing left to lose. In other words, Francophones may be looked at as those who like to maintain the status quo, whilst Anglophones use direct messages to change the status quo.

The respective beliefs of Anglophone and Francophone theatre practitioners were reflected in real life. For example, although the road between Mfou and Yaounde was untarred in early 1991, theatre practitioners in this region did not raise the issue in their theatrical performances of the same period. However, when I visited Cameroon in

early 1993, the government had tarred the road. By contrast, the Anglophone theatre practitioners in Mundemba Sub-Division had in their theatrical performances persistently entreated the government to construct a tarred road between Mundemba and Kumba. Yet the government remained adamant.

The theatre profession in Cameroon was not remunerative, thus Anglophone and Francophone performances were enacted by semi-professional theatre artists. For instance, students studying theatre arts as an option in the Department of English in the University of Yaounde act in the Yaounde University Theatre Troupe, whilst their counterparts in the Department of French act in Théâtre Université Troupe. Also National Theatre was made up of semi-professional theatre practitioners. Théâtre International de Yaounde consisted of people who were devoted to the theatre profession. Other troupes such as Les Perles Noires, Les Eléphants Noirs and Théâtre Justice were made up of semi-professional theatre practitioners. In this respect, there was a higher display of theatrical skill in the national performances. National theatre practitioners outrank amateur theatre practitioners (Lycée de Mundemba Experimental Theatre Troupe) in Ndian and (Lycée de Mfou Theatre Troupe) Mefou Divisions.

Most village and city performances in Mundemba and Mfou Sub-Divisions were improvised. This was possible because the troupes enacted the experiences of Cameroonians. For instance, all the performances of École Populaire de Mfou were improvised. Turning to Ndian Division, 90% of the performances were improvised. However, national performances were written in manuscript. The scripts were skeletal but during the performance, traditional and popular songs were included in the performance. Eyoh took notice of this issue and commented:

But many of the plots are slight, even cursory. Judging only by the scripts, one gets the impression that many of these works are order written, yet this is a stylistic device that has evolved to circumvent censorship and allow for improvisation on the part of the actors. The scripts are thus often skeletal and not fully developed. A script which reads in an hour will turn out to last three hours in production since verbal improvisations, dance, mime, and music are later integrated into the production (Eyoh 1988).

Both Anglophone and Francophone theatre practitioners used simple stage property. The troupes did not produce spectacular performances. Rather, actors and

actresses employed theatrical devices: expressive voices, clear speeches, facial expressions and bodily movements.

Asked why Francophone national troupes no longer produced splendid performances (because I had watched Francophone spectacular performances during the years 1980 - 85), Doho (a lecturer in the French Department in the University of Yaounde and the artistic director of Théâtre Université) asserted that during the early years (1975- 84) of the formation of Théâtre Université, the Chancellery of the University of Yaounde and the French Cultural Centre sponsored the troupes' productions because the founder (Leloup) was a French lady who initially produced middle class theatre. However, when she abandoned middle-class theatre in preference to producing performances which dealt with Cameroon's issues, the sponsors slashed the amount of financial assistance. Hence because of inadequate funds to produce impressive performances, Leloup resigned as the artistic director in 1985. Thenceforth, subsequent artistic directors received little financial assistance from the initial sponsors. Doho concluded by listing the reasons why Théâtre Université produced unelaborate performances. First, the sponsors slashed the amount of financial assistance to the theatre preferring to support other priorities. Second, they objected to the fact that the troupe had recently engaged in producing theatre which by dealing with Cameroon's contemporary issues uncovered social, economic, political and cultural concerns. Third, the government considered theatre a subversive element in the community, and thus would not spend money on seditious performances during a period when it was experiencing tremendous economic crisis. Fourthly, the entrance fee was inadequate to provide sufficient funds which could be invested in the troupe, and thus ensure future lavish performances. Also, the troupe wanted to get its messages to a large audience: a large entrance fee would exclude many people who wanted to watch their performances. As a consequence, the troupe depended on actors' and actresses' theatricality rather than on dazzling stage property.

The National Theatre which was sponsored by the government and generous industries (banks and corporations) was expected to produce impressive performances, yet it used simple stage property. Asked why the troupe used in elaborate stage property, Bounya Epee (the artistic director of National Theatre Troupe) asserted that

the economic crisis had sunk the country into profound poverty. Thus the government could not sponsor elaborate performances. In spite of her assertion, perhaps the government was not providing the troupe with adequate funds (to produce impressive performances) because the troupe had recently engaged in producing plays which dealt with Cameroon's contemporary issues. For example, the troupe produced Abega's Sens Unique which dealt with the major causes of national underdevelopment.

Eyoh and Bole Butake pointed out that the English-speaking Yaounde University Theatre Troupe was treated from its formation as an orphan in the sense that neither the Chancellery nor British Cultural Centre took notice or sponsored the troupe. Thus even at the height of the country's economic hardship, the troupe was nevertheless a prolific entertainer because it did not engage in expensive productions. Thus the unfair treatment had fortuitously enabled the troupe to function. On the whole, Francophone and Anglophone national troupes used unelaborate stage property.

Francophone theatre practitioners dealt with philosophical issues. For example, the song entitled Who is Calling? by the Megang group went beyond tackling human issues to philosophising about the interrelationship between the human and the spiritual worlds. Njoko, the protagonist in Njandja's La Recherche du Graal questioned the whole idea of human existence. Njoko's niece summarised human experience in a few words: 'the world was not difficult, it was not easy, it was just like that'.

By contrast, Anglophone theatre practitioners dealt with practical issues. The Ngolo modern musician produced a musical play requesting the Ngolos to contribute more funds and complete a road project. The GHS Mundemba Experimental Theatre troupe produced a play which called on the government to equip the Government High school and to tar the road between Kumba and Mundemba. Epie Ngome's For better and For Worse called on the Anglophones to secede. Hence, the Anglophones performances were more concerned with practical issues whilst the Francophones were primarily concerned with philosophical questions.

The reason why the Francophone theatre practitioners dealt primarily with philosophical issues was due to the fact that the Francophone theatre practitioners believed that the identity of the Francophone was unquestionable and the Francophone region was fairly developed in relation to the Anglophone region. By contrast,

Anglophone theatre practitioners maintained that they engaged in practical issues because the government had neglected the Anglophone region. So they produced theatre with the intention of motivating people to strengthen group identities and also to engage in development projects.

Oppressed groups produced many more sketches of Cultural Action Theatre than groups whose identities were intact and which were well off. For example, village performing artists in Mfou Sub-Division believed that their regions were fairly developed, and if they were not, the government would develop their regions. From this point of view, they produced theatre that dealt with national issues, human vices, and depravity. By contrast, local village performing artists in Mundemba Sub-Division believed that their regions had many problems, thus they produced many sketches of Cultural Action Theatre which called on the people of Mundemba to develop their respective regions. For example, the Bimas produced many more sketches of Cultural Action Theatre than any ethnic group in Mfou Sub-Division.

Also, theatre practitioners in Mundemba believed that the region was neglected by the government, thus they produced sketches of Cultural Action Theatre that dealt with the problems in Mundemba city. By contrast, the teachers of *École Populaire de Mfou* and *Lycée de Mfou*, produced theatre that dealt with national issues. Lastly, the Anglophone theatre practitioners, who believed that the Anglophone group was suppressed, produced prolific theatre that called on the Anglophones to unite and take action against the Francophones. By contrast, their Francophone counterparts did not produce Cultural Action Theatre which encouraged unity within the Francophone group; instead, they produced theatre that dealt with national issues. Lastly, students, women and the people with no political and economic power engaged in producing prolific pieces of Cultural Action Theatre. In a nutshell, disprivileged groups produce more sketches of Cultural Action Theatre than privileged groups.

Cameroonians did not want a leader who was indifferent towards the well-being of his people. Cameroonians also wanted to be given a chance to participate in the selection of the leader of the country. The performance of Butake's *And Palm-Wine Will Flow*, showed how the people initiated the death of their tyrannous *fon*. In Eyoh's *The Magic Fruit*, the people drove away their selfish chief. In Bate Besong's *The*

Requiem for the Last Kaiser, the people forced their tyrannous leader to shoot himself. In Doho's Le Crâne, the people ignored a leader who imposed himself on the people and celebrated when destiny prevented the self-imposed leader from ruling the people. In this context theatre is considered as an effective 'control' device for officials and leaders.

The performances and the responses of the various audiences prophesied the leadership crisis in the country and their prophesy came true. For example, Bole Butake's And Palm-Wine Will Flow described how the Ewawians got rid of their leader, Doho's Le Crâne depicted how the people preferred a villager to rule them instead of a selfish leader. These performances and the responses of the audiences reflected the wishes of the Cameroon people. This assertion could be substantiated with the fact that newspapers, observers and many Cameroonians claimed that Ni Fru Ndi, the opposition leader was chosen by many Cameroonians to rule Cameroon during the Presidential election of October 1992. They added that although Ni Fru Ndi was considered an illiterate simply because he did not have a University degree, he was the man Cameroonians wanted to rule the country. *La Messagère* No. 007, 13th January 1993 wrote: 'La reconciliation est possible...si M. Biya et restitue la victoire au peuple. Ombe wrote ...Decidément, le peuple a choisi son analphabete' (*Challenge* No 015, 14-21 January 1993).

The troupes used regional costumes, songs and dances. These regional names, costumes, songs and dances endowed each performance with a regional flavour. Thus although a national performance depicted national issues, it implicitly retained a regional identity. This gave the impression that Cameroon theatre practitioners wanted a Cameroon nation characterised with diversity.

Characters in some of the performances were given regional names. For instance, the characters in Eyoh's The Inheritance were named after the Bafaw ethnic group in Meme Division, South West Province. The Bafaw names included Fese, Mende, Ngoh, Epie, Makia, Mboh and Sanga Tete. In Le Crâne, Doho used Bamileke's names, such as Tatang, Desop, Fosop, Kwetse, Mafo and Maiak.

Symbolic names were used in some of the performances as a means of strengthening the national identity of Cameroon. For example, the characters in Epie

Ngome's For Better Or For Worse were Weka (West Kamerun), Garba (the leader of French Cameroon), Emeka (a Nigerian), Gordon (a British administrator) Sister Sabeth (a nun), Ednuoay (Yaounde) and so on. Also the characters in Bate Besong's Beasts Of No Nation were a Cripple, a Blindman and Aadingingin (the rulers and privileged class in the community), Night-soil men (people who carry excrement) and a Narrator (the Anglophone mouthpiece). In Abega's Sens Unique, the symbolic characters were *Ier revenant*, *Un danseur*, *Les boiteux*, *Le cul de jatte*, *Le bossu*, *L'aveugle* (the spirits) and Mbutuku (which literally means a fool in the Cameroon context). The use of symbolic names was one of the means of strengthening the Cameroon identity.

The titles of the performances were aptly chosen. For instance, Eyoh's The Inheritance, portrayed two sons both contesting for a leadership position. One of the contestants (Francophone) was chosen because he was the offspring of both parents, whilst the half-brother (Anglophone) could not succeed his stepfather. The choice of the title was apt since Cameroon politicians (Anglophone and Francophone) were contesting for a Presidential position. The aptness of the title of Bate Besong's Beasts Of No Nation was obvious as the play portrayed that the Anglophone community were strangers in Cameroon:

Cripple Why haven't they got their professional identity cards, Mr Mayor?
 Without one, they [Anglophones] are not integrated [into the
 Cameroon community], are they?

Epie Ngome's For Better Or For Worse described the reunification between Francophone and Anglophone zones and the two zones' solemn vow to remain united. Butake's And Palm-Wine Will Flow described a society where the excessive consumption of alcohol deadened everyone and also transformed people into robotic citizens. Abega's Sens Unique portrayed the 'one way' international trade as the cause of underdevelopment in developing countries. Thus the playwright considers international trade worthless:

Mbutuku Mais j' ai rien reçu en échange!
 1er revenant Comment cela rien? Et cette jambe que voilà?
 Mbutuku: Quoi? De l'or, des diamands, du café, de l'arachide pour une jambe?

Also in Le Sein t'est Pris Abega described how Nam's breast milk was used by *homme* for his own benefit and also for the advantage of *femme riche* and the West. The aptness of the titles of the performances suggested that Cameroon theatre practitioners were primarily concerned with the concerns of the people of Cameroon, and with portraying the identity of Cameroon.

The employment of a particular language in a given performance asserted the political identity of the particular group. For example, the use of a local vernacular such as the Ewondo language in a performance asserted the linguistic and political identity of the Ewondo group. In addition, the use of English language depicted the linguistic and political identity of the Anglophones. This assertion also applied to the use of the French language in a performance. Nevertheless, the inclusion of French phrases and sentences into an Anglophone performance immediately created a Cameroon political identity. This was also true when English phrases and sentences were included in a performance by French-speaking Cameroonians. Thus the employment of both English and French languages in a given performance was one of the means through which a Cameroon identity was strengthened. However, the fact that no play has been proportionately written in both English and French languages indicated that after thirty years of independence, Cameroonians' desire to have a competent knowledge of English and French has not been fully achieved. This in turn implies that Cameroon has no language which every Cameroonian will identify as the national language. I interviewed Abega and other playwrights on why they had not written plays with equal proportion of English and French. Abega said he had never thought about it and would consider the issue.

No doubt, theatre practitioners, particular professional teachers were making enormous efforts to ensure that each child in their respective institutions had a competent knowledge of French and English languages. For example, the CPDM Sub-Section woman President of Mundemba included a bilingual song in the nursery school's performance and the pupils at École Populaire de Mfou enacted a bilingual recitation entitled Où est la route de pays Bilingue.

The use of English and French in a performance immediately asserted the identity of the privileged class. This was so because it was the educated who

understood both languages. Thus French and English languages were used in theatrical performances to create a social identity as well as a national identity. By contrast, the employment of Pidgin English in a given performance united the uneducated, the semi-educated and the educated in both the Francophone and Anglophone regions. Pidgin English was therefore to an extent, one of the national languages in Cameroon. Pidgin English inadvertently endowed Cameroon with a national identity. A competent knowledge of English, French and Pidgin languages is one of the means through which Cameroonians create a Cameroon language which in turn strengthens the Cameroon identity.

Certain issues raised in a performance united or disunited members of an audience from different social and regional backgrounds. For example, during the performance of Beasts of No Nation, the Narrator who was the mouthpiece of the Anglophones said 'no one should touch my oil'. The mere mention of oil immediately united the Anglophones into a regional group against the Francophones in the auditorium. Here one is apt to say that such theatrical performances could lead to more polarization between Francophones and Anglophones. Nevertheless, the majority of the Francophones in the audience who belonged to the disprivileged class maintained that the play was not merely about the exploitation of Anglophones, it was about the exploitation of the disadvantaged class by the rulers of the country. The mention of oil united people with regional interests as well as those with social interest. Thus, interest groups overlapped since middle class Anglophones also belonged to the Anglophone region. Anglophones who belonged to the middle class enjoyed certain privileges in the country. Thus they relegated their regional interests in preference to social interest. The disprivileged class argued that the problem did not lie in the dichotomy between the Anglophones and Francophones, but in the exploitation of the people by the middle class, the rulers, and politicians. This situation whereby the Anglophones give priority to class interest instead of regional interest keeps the Francophones and Anglophones together and also strengthens a sense of nationhood. Hence every Cameroonian is proud to say 'I am a Cameroonian, I remain a Cameroonian and I will die a Cameroonian': the identity of Cameroon is intact.

Cameroonians were disillusioned with the total collapse of morality in Cameroon. The performances dealt with corruption, bribery, disrespect for others, gluttony, selfishness, avarice and so on. The audiences' responses also revealed that Cameroonians were against these vices. Thus Cameroonians must discard these human vices and depravity if they earnestly want the country to develop. Also, Cameroonians do not appreciate people who have an overwhelming appetite for Western goods. Abega's Sens Unique portrayed Nki who wanted the most luxurious recent car from Europe. In Abega's Le Sein t' est Pris, Koum used the revenue he appropriated from the sales of his wife breast milk to purchase an expensive suit made in France and an air ticket from Air France in order to spend a week end in Paris. In Oyono Mbia's Le Bourbier, the audience joined the playwright in criticising a village woman who relegated Cameroon educational institutions in preference to educational institutions in France. In Bate Besong's Beasts of No Nation, the audience yelled when Aadingingin proclaimed that he and his family would spend holidays in Europe in the most luxurious hotels. The audience's response to these characters' bottomless desire for western goods and services implied that Cameroonians wanted the Cameroon people to love home goods. If Cameroonians develop an interest for home goods and services, the economy will expand in order to meet up with the people's high demand. This will in turn create development in the country.

A play which demands the audience to mobilise and take action must portray the advantages that would arise from the changes they propose. For example, the praise-singer's performance at the Meeting of the Bima Chiefs succeeded, because all the chiefs wanted the market to be located in the Bima region and not in any of the neighbouring regions. Also, the audience at Toko agreed with the modern musician who used his performance to remind the Ngolos that they only needed to contribute more funds for the road project in order to see the bulldozed track completed, and the GHS Mundemba Experimental Theatre Troupe's performance succeeded because the Senior-Divisional Officer and the GHS school administration wanted to protect their respective positions. By contrast, Epie Ngome's For Better Or For Worse which called on the Anglophones to secede did not appeal to many Anglophones because they belonged to various social groups that cut across the regional boundaries.

Francophone theatre practitioners thought that the term 'development' referred to intellectual objectivity, the ability to be realistic, and to engage in critical analysis and thought. For example, the Megang group, Lycée de Mfou and Francophone national practitioners produced theatre which called for the government, rulers, politicians and the middle class to be realistic and thus mete out justice. In contrast, city and village theatre practitioners in the Anglophone zone, such as the Bimas and GHS Mundemba Experimental Theatre troupe thought of the term as denoting a combination of constructive thinking and the realisation of physical projects. Although, according to village and city Anglophone theatre practitioners 'development' meant engaging in intellectual objectivity and providing physical and material facilities, the levels of development differed according to the relative life-styles of the communities. Villagers and city theatre practitioners perceived the concept in terms of an advancement in the material and economic quality of their respective group's present life-style. National Anglophone theatre practitioners thought the term 'development' referred to intellectual probity and freedom. In Bate Besong's Beasts of No Nation, the Narrator called on the Anglophones to fight for their freedom. In And Palm-Wine Will Flow, Kwengong called on people to get rid of an uncaring and selfish leader. And in Ngome's For Better Or For Worse, Weka urged the Anglophones to secede. On the whole, Anglophone and Francophone theatre practitioners have contrasting opinions about the notion of development.

Indeed, similar contrasting notions about the construction of cultural identities, the use of theatre and the themes with which it deals are to be found throughout this investigation of Anglophone and Francophone theatre performances in Cameroon.

APPENDIX

Village Performances in Mundemba Sub-Divison (in the Anglophone zone) and in Mfou Sub-Division (in the Francophone zone).

Name of playwright or Group	Title of Performance	Place of Performance	Theatre Troupe
Fabe women	Fabe Women's Mime	Fabe village 26th Nov 1990	Fabe Women
Old man	Old man's performance	Fabe Village 26th Nov 1990	Old man
Pupils	Music Theatre	Esoki Bima Viallge 27th Nov 1990	Pupils
Dignitaries	Dignitaries' Dance	Esoki Bima 27th Nov 1990	Dign- itaries
Men	Warriors' Dance	Esoki Bima 2th Nov 1990	Men
Pupils	Music Theatre	Makango Village 29th Nov 1990	Pupils
People	Song	Makango 29th Nov 1990	Pupils
Men	Song	Mankango 29th Nov 1990	Men
Tukamo Etuka Elias	Musical Theatre	Toko Village 30th Dec, 1991	Tukamo Etuka Elias
Megang Group	Music Dance Theatre	Mfou February 1991	Megang Group

City Performances in Mundemba and Mfou Cities

Name of playwright or Group	Title of Performance	Place of Performance	Theat- re Troupe
Agoons Daniel	The Farmer & the Hunt- er	Mundemba City, Villages and in Pamol Camps 1989 / 90	Students and town people
Women	Emeli	Mundemba Women's Centre Nov/Dem 1990	Women at the Women
Community Development Staff	Sensible Couple	Mundemba city and surrounding villages and camps 1989 /90	Comm- unity' Dev. Staff
CWA	The Drunkard	Mundemba City and Ikasa 22nd Dec. 1990	CWA
CWF	CWF's Play	Mundemba City 19th Sep. 1990	CWF
Nursery School & Staff	Nativity Play	Mundemba Women's Centre 20th Dec 1990	Nursery School & Staff
GTHS Students	Music Dance Theatre	Council Hall Mundemba 24th Nov 1990	GTHS Students
GHS Students	GHS Mundemba Students' Play	Council Hall Mundemba 24th Nov 1990	GHS Students
Pupils & Staff	Une Autre Rouge	Mfou CPDM Hall 11th Feb 1991	Pupils & Staff
Pupils & Staff	Médecine Traditionnelle	Mfou CPDM Hall 11th Feb 1991	Pupils and Staff of École Populaire
Pupils	Quel Est la	" "	" "

& Staff

Famille
Model?

" "

Ou Est la
Route Dans
Un Pays
Bilingue

" "

" "

Njandja,
FelixLa Recherche
du GraalMfou
CPDM Hall
11th Feb 1991Lycée de
Mfou
Students

National Performances by Anglophone and Francophone national theatre practitioners during **Recontres Theatrales de Yaounde édition - 21-29 mars 1991**(the plays analysed are highlighted in bold).

Name of playwright	Title of Play	Place of Performance	Name of Troupe
Abega Severin Cécil	Sens Unique	Cameroon Confress Hall 9 pm 21st March 1991	Théâtre National
....	Spectacle d'humour	Café Théâtre 10 pm 21st March 1991	Le Zèbre
Bang, Andre	King Laha ou les Affolés	Centre Camerounais Culturel 6 pm 22nd March 1991	Comédie des Pagaeurs
Brecht, Bertolt	Dans la Jungle des Villes	l'Institut Goeth 9 pm, 22nd March 1991	Tréteaux d'Ebene
Mbia, Oyono Guillaume	Le Bourbier	Café Théâtre 6 pm 23rd March 1991	Théâtre International
Doho, Gilbert	Le Crâne	l'Amphi 700 de Université de Yaounde 9 pm 23rd March 1991	Théâtre de Universitaire
Mbala, B	Bengoula au Cabinet du Ministre	Centre Culturel Camerounais 6 pm 24th March 1991	Théâtre Justice
Awana, Onana Didier, Jacques	Les Tribulations d'une renaissance	Centre Culturel Camerounais 9 pm 24th March 1991	Les Mousquetaires
Mokilo, Bodule	Kodi	Centre Culturel Camerounais 6 pm 25th	Le Théâtre Bolo Penda de Douala

		March 1991	
Mbena, Ndzana	L'épopée de Nzana Ngazogo	Centre Culturel Francais 9 pm 25th March 1991	Mugra Théâtre
Njingoumbe Ntetmoun	La Pipe Royal	Centre Culturel Camerounais 6 pm 26th March 1991	CECAD
Bate, Besong	Beasts of No Nation	l' Amphi 700 de Université 9 pm 26th March 1991	The Yaounde Universi- ty Theatre
...	Bobo va à l'école	Centre Culturel Francais 3 pm 27th March 1991	Elépha- nts Noire
Eyoh, Ndumbe	The Magic Fruit	Capitol 3 pm 27th March 1991	Yaounde Childre- n's Collecti- ve Theatre
Bardem, Antonio Juan	Mort d' un cycliste	Centre Culturel Camerounais 6 pm 27th March 1991	Projecti- on du film
Mongo, Pabe Juan	Le Subtitut	Centre Culturel Francais 9 pm 27th March 1991	Norma- lienne
Abega, Severin Cécil	Le sein t' est pris [sic]	l'Amphi de l'E.N.S. 6 pm 28th March 1991	Les Perles Noires
Fante, John	La Route de Los Angeles	Centre Culturel Francais 9 pm 28th March 1991.	Alexandre Fabre

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

- Abah, Oga, S, and Etherton, Michael, "The Samaru Projects: Street Theatre in Northern Nigeria", Theatre Research International, Vol 17, USA, Indiana University Press in cooperation with The Ohio State University, 1981-82.
- Abega, Séverin, Cécil, Le Sein t'est pris (Unpublished).
- Abega, Séverin, Cécil, Sens Unique (Unpublished).
- African Council Communication Education (ACC) [sic] and University of Research and Development Services Bureau (URDS), "A paper presented at an International Theatre for Development Workshop" Organised by (ACC) in Collaboration with (URDS), University of Sierra Leone in Segbwema, Sierra Leone from November 14 - December 2, 1988.
- Agbor-Tabi, Bilateral Assistance in Africa 'The Case of Cameroon' University Press of America, Lanham, New York, London, 1984.
- Akame, Fouman, Jean. M Paul Biya Ou L' Incarnation La Rigueur, Yaounde, Le publications de L'Universitaire de Yaounde, SOPECAM, 1983.
- Allemtum, Tabuwe, Michael et al, Socio-Political Integration and the Nso Institutions Cameroon, Yaounde, institute of Human Sciences, 1989.
- Allier, Raoul, Trans. Rothwell, Fred, The Mind Of The Savage, London, G. Bells & Sons, 1929.
- Amin, S. Neo-Colonialism in West Africa , Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1966..
- Anderson, Benedict, Imagined Communities, Reflections on the the origin and spread of Nationalism London, VERSO, 1990.
- Ankie, M. Hoovelt, The Third World in The Global Development, London, Macmillan Educational Ltd, 1987.
- Anon, "France Turns Down Biya's Request for 50bn Frs Loan, Wants Oil Money Pumped into the Economy", Cameroon Post, No 65.
- Anon, "The National Coordination Committee of Cameroon Students, University of Yaounde, 8 Students Killed? Over 1,000 Arrested" Cameroon Post, No 65.
- Anon, "Women in agriculture " in Courier No. 91 May-June 1985.

- Ardener, Edwin "Belief and the Problem of Women" in J.S. La Fontaine, (ed) The Interpretation of Ritual, Great Britain, Tavistock Pub. 1972: 135-159.
- Arnold, Stephen, "Preface to a History of Cameroon Literature in English", in Research in African Literature, Vol. 14, USA, Indiana University Press in cooperation with The Ohio State University. 1983: 497-515.
- Aspiazu, Rojas, Luis, "Indigenous Institutions and Native Development in Bolivia", in R. Kidd & N. Colletta, (eds) Tradition For Development, Berlin German Foundation For International development, 1980.
- Asquith, Rosaline: "The Arena of Exploration Children's Theatre" in Sandy Craig, (ed) Dreams and Deconstructions, Amber Lane Press Ltd 1980: 86-95
- Banham, Martin, "Languages of African Theatre: A Nigerian Case Study" A Paper presented at the 8th International Symposium by Theatre Critics and Scholars at NOVI DAS, Yugoslavia, June 1991.
- Banham, Martin, African Theatre Today, London, Pitman, 1976.
- Barba, Eugenio and Savarese, Nicola, A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology, London, Routledge, 1991.
- Barber, Karin, "Multiple Discourses in Yorùbá Oral Tradition" in Baxter & Fardon, (eds) Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester, Vol. 73, No 3, Autumn 1991: 11-25.
- Barnes, Jonathan, Aristotle, New York, University Press, 1987.
- Barth, Frederick, "Introduction" in F. Barth, (ed) Ethnic Groups and Boundaries, Norway, Universitetsforlaget, 1969.
- Barth, Frederick, Political Leadership among Swat Pathans, London, The Athlone Press, 1986.
- Bate, Besong, Beasts Of No Nation, Cameroon, Nooremac Press, 1990.
- Bate, Besong, Requiem For the Last Kaiser, Calabar, Centaur, Pub, 1991
- Bauman, Richard, Verbal Art as Performance, Waveland Press, 1984.
- Baumann, Gerd, National Integration and Local Identity, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987.
- Beales, D. E. D. "Mazzini and Revolutionary Nationalism" in Thompson David, (ed) Political Ideas, England, Penguin Books Ltd, 1966.

- Beattie, John, Other Cultures, New York, Routledge, 1964.
- Beattie, John, "Ritual and Social Change", in Man, Vol. 1. 1966.
- Bebey, Francis, The Ashanti Doll, London, Heinemann, 1978
- Benjamin, C Nancy & Devarajan, Shantayanan, "Oil Revenue and Cameroon Economy" in M. G. Schatzberg & W. Zartman, (eds) The Political Economy of Cameroon, USA, Praeger Press, 1986: 166-188.
- Bennet, Fran; Campbell, Beatrix; Coward, Rosalind, "Feminists-The Degenerates of the social?" in F.Bennet et al, (eds) Politics And Power, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1981: 83-93.
- Beti, Mongo, The Poor Christ Of Bomba, Translated by G. Moore, London, Heinemann International Publishing, 1988.
- Bidney, David, Theoretical Anthropology, USA, Columbia University Press, 1968.
- Biya Paul, Cameroon Post No. 65 April 1991.
- Biyiti bi Essam, J.P, Cameroon Complots et bruits de bottes, Points de vue L' Harmattan, 1984.
- Bjornson, Richard, The African Quest for Freedom and Identity: Cameroon writing and the national Experience, Indiana University Press, 1991.
- Bluestone, Harris, Natalie, Women And The Ideal Society, New York, Berg Pub, 1987.
- Boal, Augusto Theatre of the Oppressed, trans, Charles A. & Maria-Odilia Leal McBride, London, Pluto Press, 1979.
- Boal, Augusto, Documents on The Theatre of the Oppressed, trans, Anthony Hozier and Simon Medaney, London, Red Letters, 1987.
- Bradby, David and McCormick, John, People's Theatre, London, Croom Helm Ltd, 1987
- Brandt, Willy, North-South: A Programme For Survival. The Report of Independent Commission on International Development Issues, London: Pan Books, 1980.
- Brecht On Theatre, Trans, John Willet, London, Methuen Ltd, 1986.
- Burnham, Opportunity And Constraint in a Savannah Society. The Gbaya of Meiganga, Cameroon London, Academic Press Inc, 1980.

- Burton, W. F. P, The Magic, Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1961: 126.
- Butake, Bole, And Palm-Wine Will Flow, Cameroon, Société de Presse et d' Editions du Cameroun (SOPECAM), 1990.
- Butake, Bole, Lake God, Cameroon, SOPECAM, 1986.
- Butake, Bole, The Rape of Michelle, Cameroon, SOPECAM, 1984.
- Butake, Bole, The Survivors, Cameroon, SOPECAM, 1989.
- Cameroon Anglophone Movement (CAM) "Constitution of the Cameroon Anglophone Movement" (unpublished paper).
- Cameroon Sings Her Unity. Poems, Ministry of Information and Tourism, 1964.
- Chalosky, N and Lincoln, C. I. Up the HRD Ladder: Productivity Through People, New York, West Publishing Co, 1986.
- Chaucer, Geoffrey, The General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, James Winny, (ed) Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Chinua, Achebe, Lecture, Channel iii, January 1990.
- Clarke, B, Peter, West Africa and Christianity, London, Edward Arnold Pub, 1986.
- Cohen, Abner Two-Dimensional Man, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974.
- Cohen, P. Anthony, The Symbolic Construction of Community, London, Tavistock Pub, 1985.
- Colletta, Nat, "Tradition for Change: indigenous socio-cultural forms as a basis for non-formal education" in R. Kidd & N. Colletta, (eds) Tradition For Development, Berlin German Foundation For International Development, 1980.
- Collins, Richard, Cultural Communication and National Identity: The Case of Canadian Television, London, University of Toronto Press, 1990.
- Crick, Bernard, Essays on Politics and Literature, Edinburgh University Press, 1989.
- Cuddon, J.A, A Dictionary of Literary Terms, England, Penguin Books, 1979.
- David, Robertson, Dictionary of Politics, London, Penguin Group, 1988.
- Davidson, Basil, "What This Book is About" in B. Davidson et al, (eds) The West African Problems of Independence, Great Britain, George Allen and Urwin Ltd.
- Davies, Andrew, Other Theatres, London, MacMillan Education, 1987.

- Dawn, Chatty, "Tradition and Change Among the Harasiis in Oman", in M.Salem ,
Muneera et al, (eds) Anthropology and Development in North Africa and the
Middle East, (USA) Westview Press, 1990.
- De Lancy, W. Mark, "Cameroon: Dependence and Independence", in The Journal of
Modern African Studies, Vol 28, No 4, Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Debel, Anne, Cameroon Today , France Pub, 1977.
- Dennis, A. Philip, "The Role of The Drunk in a Oaxacam Village" in American
Anthropology, Vol 77, 1975: 856 - 863.
- Diamond, Stanley, "Plato and the Definition of Primitive" in J & D Rothenberg, (eds)
Symposium of the Whole, University of California Press, 1983.
- Dilley, Roy, "Performance, ambiguity and power in Tukolor weavers' songs" in K.
Barber et al, (eds) Discourse and Its Disguises Centre of West African Studies,
University of Birmingham, 1989: 138-152.
- Doho, Gilbert, Le Crâne (Unpublished).
- Doho, Gilbert, "Théâtre et representation au Cameroon" in Literature Camerounais,
Paris, L'Harmattan, 1989, 149-155.
- Douglas, Macqueen, Loudon, The Kilt, Edinburgh, Andrew Elliot, 1914.
- Douglas, Mary, Purity and Danger, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1966.
- Eckert, Penelope & Newmark, Russel, "Central Eskimo Song Duels: A Contextual
Analysis of Ritual Ambiguity" in Ethnology, Vol 19, 1980, 191-192.
- Edwards, Chris, The Fragmented World, Competing Perspective on Trade, Money and
Crisis, London, Methuen & Co, 1985.
- Ejedepang-Koge, S.N. Change in Cameroon, Virginia, ARC Pub, 1985.
- Epale, Simon, Joseph, Plantations and Development in Western Cameroon 1885-1975,
New York, Vantage Press, 1985.
- Epie, Ewoke, Martin, "An Address Given by Ambassador Epie Ekwoke Martin,
National Chairman of The Cameroon Anglophone Movement (CAM) on the
Occasion of Federation and Independence Day, of Southern Cameroons on
October 1st 1992, at Buea". (Unpublished Paper).
- Epie, Ewoke, Martin, "Open Letter to Anglophones of Cameroons", Yaounde, 1992.
(Unpublished Paper).

- Epskamp, P. Kees, Theatre in Search of Social Change, trans, Hooijmans Greet, Centre for the Study of Education in Developing Countries (CESO), 1989.
- Erven, Van, Eugène, "Revolution, Freedom, and Theatre of Liberation", R. Bjornson, (ed) Research in African Literature, Indiana University Press, Vol, 22, No. 3, 1991.
- Etherton, Michael, The Development of African Drama, London: Hutchinson & Co. 1982.
- Eugenio, Barba, & Savarese, Nicola, A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology, London, Routledge, 1991.
- Evans-Pritchard, E E Social Anthropology, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979.
- Evans-Pritchard, E.E, The Nuer, Oxford University Press, 1968.
- Evans-Pritchard, E.E. "The Nuer Of The Southern Sudan" African Political Systems, in M. Fortes and E.E. Evans-Pritchard, (eds) Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1940: 272-297.
- Evans-Pritchard. E.E., Witchcraft Oracles and Magic among the Azande, Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Eyoh, Ndumbe, Hammock to Bridges, Yaounde, Bet & Co., Pub, 1986.
- Eyoh, Ndumbe, Hansel, "Cameroon Theatre" in Butake, Bole, and Doho Gilbert, (eds) Théâtre Camerounais, Cameroon Theatre, Yaounde, Bet & Co Ltd, 1988, 123-140.
- Eyoh, Ndumbe, Hansel, Munyenge, Yaounde, Luma Graphic Systems, 1990.
- Eyoh, Ndumbe, Hansel, The Inheritance (Unpublished).
- Eyoh, Ndumbe, Hansel, The Magic Fruit (Unpublished).
- Fage, J. D, An Introduction To The History Of West Africa, Cambridge, University Press, 1955,
- Fardon, Richard Raiders & Refugees. Trends in Chamba Political Development, London, Smithsonian Institution, 1988.
- Fonlon, Bernard, The Genuine Intellectual, Cameroon, Buma Kor Pub. House, 1978.
- Forje, W John, Cameroon Five Year Development Plan, University of London, 1973.
- Forje, W John, The One and Indivisible Cameroon, University of Lund, Tryckbaren, 1981.

- Freire, Paulo, Cultural Action for Freedom, Middlesex: Penguin Education, 1970.
- Freire, Paulo, trans, Myra, Bergamen, Romos, Pedagogy Of The Oppressed, New York, Herber and Herber, 1972.
- Fugard, Athol, "Introduction", Boesman and Lena and Other Plays, Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Gardinier, David, Cameroon: United Nations Challenge to French Policy, London, Oxford University Press, 1963.
- Gellner, Ernest, Culture, Identify, and Politics, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- George, E. R. David, Theatre in Focus: Balinese Ritual Theatre, UK, Chadwyck-Healey Ltd, 1991.
- Gluckman, Max, "Gossip and Scandal" in Current Anthropology, Vol 4, 1963.
- Gluckman, Max, "The Kingdom Of The Zulu Of South African" in M. Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, (eds) African Political System, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1940: 272-297.
- Goldberg, Roselee, Performance Art, from Futurism to the Present, World of Art Series, 1988.
- Goody, Jack, Technology, Tradition and the State in Africa, New York, University of Cambridge, 1980.
- Haket, Lenneke, Theatre For Development, Centre for the Study of Education in Developing Countries (CESO) Catalogue No 1, Available at CESO Library.
- Hale, J.R. "Machiavelli and the Self-Sufficient State in Thompson David, (ed) Political Ideas, England, Penguin Books, Ltd, 1966, 22-34.
- Hall, W. Robert, Plato, London, George Allen & Unwin Pub, 1981.
- Harding, Frances, Continuity and Creativity Theatre, A thesis submitted to the University of Exeter for the degree of Doctor of philosophy in Drama in the Faculty of Arts in June 1988.
- Hart, Keith, The Political Economy of West African Agriculture, Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Hatch, Elvin, Theories of Man and Culture, New York, Colombia University Press, 1973.

- Heron, G. A. "Introduction" in O. Okot Bitek, Song of Lawino, Great Britain, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 1984.
- Hoben, Allan, "Assessing the Social Feasibility of a Settlement Project in North Cameroon" in M.M.Horowitz et al, (eds) Anthropology and Rural Development in West Africa, (USA), Westview Press, 1986.
- Holderness, Graham " Introduction", G. Holderness, (ed) The Politics of Theatre and Drama, London, Macmillan Academic & Professional Ltd, 1992.
- Horton, Robin, " African Traditional Thought and Western Science" in Africa Vol 37, 1967.
- Horton, Robin, "Ritual Man in Africa" in Journal of the International Institute [sic], Vol xxxiv, No 2, April 1964.
- Humm, Maggie, The Dictionary of Feminist Theory, London, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989.
- Jackson, Michael, Allegories of the Wilderness, Indian University Press, 1982.
- Jaggar, Alison M. Feminist Politics and Human Nature, Sussex, Rowman & Allenheld, 1983.
- Johnny, Michael and Richards, Paul "Indigenous Knowledge, Folk-Media, and Critiquing Rural Development in Sierra Leone [sic] " in R. Kidd & N. Colletta (eds) Tradition For Development, Berlin German Foundation For International Development, 1980.
- Jones, Emrys, Towns & Cities, London, Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Joseph, Richard, A. Radical Nationalism in Cameroon, Oxford University Press, 1977.
- Kamlongera, Christopher, "Theatre for Development: The Case of Malawi", in Theatre Research International, USA, Indiana University Press in cooperation with The Ohio State University, Vol. 7. 1981-82.
- Karp, Ivan, "Beer Drinking and Social Experience in an African Society: An Essay in Formal Sociology", in I. Karp & S.C. Bird, (eds) Explorations in African Systems of Thought, Indiana University Press, 1980.
- Keesing, M. Roger, Cultural Anthropology, A Contemporary Perspective, Holt, Rinehart & Winson, INC 1981.
- Kenjo, Jumbam, The White Man of God (London), Heineman Books, 1980.

- Kerr, David, "Didactic Theatre In Africa" Harvard Educational Review, No 57, 1981.
- Kidd, Ross, "Folk Media, Popular Theatre and Conflicting Strategies for Social Change in the Third World" in R. Kidd & N. Colletta, (eds) Tradition For Development, Berlin German Foundation For International development, 1980.
- Kingston, Jeremy, Arts and Artists, USA, Ferguson Pub Company, 1989.
- Kolefa-Kale, Ndiva, An African Experiment in Nation Building: The Bilingual Cameroon Republic Since Reunification, Colorado, West View Press, 1980.
- Langness, L. L. "Ritual, Power, and Male Dominance in New Guinea Highland" in D. Raymond Fogelson and Richard N. Adams, (eds) The Anthropology Of Power, United Kingdom, Academic Press Inc, 1977.
- Le Message Du Renouveau. Discours Et Interviews Du President Paul Biya. Tome ii.
The New Deal Message, Speeches and Interviews of President Paul Biya, Editions Sopecam, December 1983- Nov 1988.
- Le Vine, T. Victor, The Cameroons From Mandate to Independence, University Of California Press, 1964.
- Leach, Edmund, Culture and Communication, Cambridge University Press, 1976.
- Leacock, Eleanor "Women Power and Authority" Eleanor Leacock et al, (eds) Visibility and Power Essays on Women in Society and Development, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1986, 107-135.
- Lewis, Gilbert, Day of Shining Red. An Essay on Understanding Ritual, London, Cambridge University, 1980.
- Lewis, I M, Ecstatic Religion, Penguin Books, 1975.
- Lewis. I. M. (ed) "Nationalism and Self-Determination in the Horn of Africa", reviewed by G.J.Abbink, The Journal Of Modern African Studies, Vol 22, No 2. Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Liebenow, Gus. J. "The One-Party State in West Africa: Its Strengths and Weaknesses in the Nation-Building Process" in H. William Lewis, (ed) French Speaking Africa: The Search for Identity, New York, Walker and Company, 1965.

- Logmo, Bienvenu " Cultural Identity, Traditional Medicine and its Pharmacopoeia" in The Cultural Identity of Cameroon, Ministry of Information and Culture, Department of Cultural Affairs, Yaounde, Cameroon, 1985: 402-9.
- Mbawa, Paddy, "In a Lighter Mood 'Who Rules Here?' " Cameroon Post, No 62 March 1991.
- Mboumoua, Eteki, "Biya used me and sacked me" Cameroon Post No 61. March 1992.
- Mbuagbaw, Tambi-Eyongetah, Brain, Robert & Palmer, Robin, A History of the Cameroon , Longman Group, 1990.
- Meillassoux, Claude, Maidens, Meal and Money, USA, Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- Mlama, Muhando, Penina, Culture and Development, Sweden, Motala Grafiska, Motala, 1991.
- Montage, Essiti, Biya Paul, Ou L' Incarnation De Rigueur, Editions Sopecam Mai 1983.
- Mountjoy, Alan, B. Industrialization and Developing Countries, London, Hutchinson Ltd, 1975.
- Msonthi, Jerome, "Traditional Medicine and Health Care Coverage", in The Journal of African Studies, Vol. 22, No 4, Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Mudimbe, V Y. Parables And Fables, Exegesis, Textuality, and Politics in Central Africa, USA, The University of Wincosin Press, 1991.
- Mukong, Womah, Michael, "CAM Statement on the Anglophone Examination Board", Yaounde, 1992. (Unpublished Paper).
- Mutute, Dan L The Socio-Cultural Legacies of the Bakweris of Cameroon, Yaounde, The Publishing and Production Centre for Teaching and Research (C.E.P.E.R) 1988.
- Nash, Manning, The Cauldron of Ethnicity, London, The University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- Ndongko, A. Wilfred and Vivekanando, Franklin, Africa -The Awakening Giant. Economic Development of Cameroon, Vol 2, Bethany Books, Stockholm, Sweden 1989.
- Nfo, N. Nfor, To Cameroon Patriots, Nigeria, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1985.

- Nganjeu, Jean, Le Cameroun et la Crise, Paris, L' Harmattan , Collection, 1988.
- Ngoh, Julius, Victor, Cameroon 1884-1985, Yaounde, Navi-Group Pub, 1988.
- Ngoh, Julius, Victor, Constitutional Development in Southern Cameroon, 1946-1961,
Yaounde, C E P E R, 1990.
- Ngome, Epie, Victor, For Better Or For Worse, (Unpublished).
- Ngome, Epie, Victor, Not The Name, (Unpublished).
- Ngome, Epie, Victor, The First Client (Unpublished).
- Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Decolonising the Mind, England, James Currey Ltd, 1986.
- Ngugi Wa Thiongo and Ngugi Wa Miri, I Will Marry When I Want, London,
Heinemann, 1986.
- Ngugi wa Thiongo & Micere, Githae Mugo, The Trial of Dedan Kimathi, New
Hampshire, Heinemann Educational Books, Inc, 1986.
- Ngwa, J.A. A New Geography Of Cameroon, UK, Longman Group Ltd, 1987.
- Nkendem, Forbinake, "Cameroon Year Of Political Revolution" in Cameroon Tribune,
No. 1091, Friday, January 4th 1991: 4.
- Nkwi, Nchoji, Paul, Traditional Diplomacy, A Study of Inter-Chiefdom Relations in
the Western Grassfields, North West Province of Cameroon, Cameroon,
Publication of the Department of Sociology, University of Yaounde, 1986.
- Obeyesekere, Rajini, "The Significance of Performance for its Audience: Hasidic
Celebrations of Purim in Brooklyn" in Willa Appel, (ed) By means of
performance, intercultural studies of theatre and ritual, Melbourne, Press
Syndicate Of The University Of Cambridge, 1990.
- Ogunba, Oyin and Irele, Abiola, Theatre in Africa, Ibadan University Press, 1978.
- Ombe, Ndzana, V. "Le Peuple a choisi son Analphabete", Challenge No 015, 14-21
January 1993.
- Ong J. Walter, Orality and Literacy, London, Routledge, 1989.
- Paine, Robert, " What is Gossip About? An Alternative Hypothesis" in Man, Vol. 2,
1967.
- Paine, Robert, Politically Speaking USA, Institute for the Study of Human Issues,
1981.

- Peters, R.S. "Hegel and The Nation-State" in Thompson David, (ed) Political Ideas, England, Penguin Books, Ltd, 1966, PP 130-143.
- Piper, Judith, "The Feminist Spectator as Critic" in Theatre Research International, Vol. 15, No. 1, Oxford University Press, in Association with the International Federation for Theatre Research, Spring 1990.
- Piscator Erwin, The Political Theatre, trans, Hugh Forrrinson, London, Eyre Methuen Ltd, 1980.
- Plessz, G Nicolas, Problems And Prospects of Economic Integration in West Africa, Britain, McGill University Press, 1968.
- Probst, Peter, "Delancy, Geschiere and Konings" in Africa Vol 61, No. 2. 1991: 287-9.
- Prothero, G.W. Cameroon, Number 3, London, H M Stationery Office, Pub, 1920.
- Ranganath, H K " Indigenous Change Agents and Non-Formal Education in India" in R. Kidd & N. Colletta, (eds) Tradition For Development, Berlin German Foundation For International development, 1980.
- Ranganath, H, K, "Introduction", Using Folk Entertainment to Promote National Development, Paris: UNESCO, 1980.
- Rapport de la Commission Jeanneyey, 'La Politique de Cooperation avec Les Pays en voie de Développement: La Documentation Française, Novembre, 1964: 62.
- Readings, Bill, Introducing Lyotard "Art and Politics", London, Routledge, 1991.
- Relating To The State Of Emergency [Cameroon Government], Bill No 462/PJL/ AN, 22nd November, 1990.
- Rosen, Lawrence, "The Social and Conceptual Framework of Arab-Barber Relationship in Central Morocco" E. Gellner et al, (eds) Arabs & Berbers, Great Britain, Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd, 1973: 155-175.
- Sam-Kubam & Ngwa-Nyamboli, Richard, (eds) Paul Biya and the Quest for Democracy in Cameroon, Yaounde CLE, 1985.
- Sanday, Reeves, Peggy, Female Power and Male Dominance, USA. Cambridge University Press, 1987.

- Schechner, Richard and Appel Willa "Introduction" in Richard Schechner & Willa Appel, (eds) By means of performance, intercultural studies of theatre and ritual, Melbourne, Press Syndicate Of The University Of Cambridge, 1990.
- Schechner, Richard, Between Theatre and Anthropology, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987.
- Schechner, Richard, "From Ritual to Theatre and Back: The Structure/Process of the Efficacy-Entertainment Dyad", in J.&D. Rothenberg, (eds) Symposium of the Whole, University of California Press, 1983: 311-324.
- Seddon, J. David "Local Politics and State Intervention: Northeast Morocco from 1870 1970" in E. Gellner et al, (eds) Arabs & Berbers, Great Britian, Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd, 1973, 109-139.
- Smith, D. Anthony, The Ethnic Origins of Narions, USA, Basil Blackwell, Ltd, 1989.
- Southern, Richard, The Seven Ages of the Theatre, London, Faber and Faber Ltd, 1985.
- Soyinka, Wole, The Interpreters, London, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 1985.
- Supple, Barry E. The Experience of Economic Growth: New York, Random House, Inc, 1963.
- Tabuwe, Aletum, Bafut Institution in Modern Politics in Cameroon, Yaounde, SOPECAM, 1990.
- Tahoben, Bisong, "Was Finance Minister Involved in 234m Frs CNPS Swindle?" Cameroon Post, NO 59.
- Tanyi, Oben, George, "Pay Farmers Now or Lose Their Votes", in Cameroon Outlook, Vol 21, Nov 13-15, 1990.
- Tanyi-Tang, Anne, Theatre For Development: A Case Study of the South-West Province, Cameroon. A M. Litt Thesis submitted to the University of Kent in March 1989.
- The Complete Work Of Shakespeare, London, Type Press Ltd, 1989.
- The Holy Bible, Oxford University Press, 1971.
- The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht, Trans, Willet, London, Methuen Ltd, 1986.

- Thomson, Peter and Salgado, Gamini, Companion To Theatre, London, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1987.
- Tiagha, Hannah "Women and Urban Problems in Cameroon" in Courier no. 91 May-June 1985.
- Turnbull, Colin, The Forest People, London, Triad/Paladin, 1988.
- Turnbull, Colin, The Mountain People, London, Triad/Paladin, 1989.
- Turner, Victor, Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1975.
- Turner, Victor, From Ritual to Theatre, New York, Performing Arts Journal Pub, 1982.
- Turner, Victor, "Are there universals in myth, ritual, and drama" in Richard Schechner, and Willa Appel, (eds) By means of performance, intercultural studies of theatre and ritual, Melbourne, Press Syndicate Of The University Of Cambridge, 1990.
- Viezz, Moema, "Alternative Communication for Women's Movement in Latin America", in Michael Traber, (ed) The Myth of the Information Revolution, London, Sage, 1986.
- Ward, Barner, The Rich Nations and the Poor Nations, Great Britain, Hamish Hamilton Ltd, 1962.
- White, Landeg, "Poetic Licence: oral poetry and history" in K. Barber et al, (eds) Discourse and Its Disguises, Centre of West African Studies, University of Birmingham, 1989.
- Whitman, Walt, Leaves of Grass, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Willard, R. Johnson, "The Cameroon Federation: Political Union between English and French Speaking Africa", in William H. Lewis (ed) French Speaking Africa: The Search for Identity, Canada, George Mcleod Ltd, 1965: 205-220.
- Willet, John, The Theatre of Erwin Piscator, London, Eyre Methuen, 1980.
- Wilson, John, Politically Speaking, Massachusetts, Basil Blackwell, Inc, 1990.